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Commentary on the Psalms

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COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS

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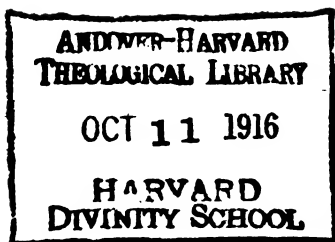
PSALMS I—L

By
REV. E. SYLVESTER BERRY

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PREFACE

THE present work has been undertaken for the purpose of supplying an explanation of the Psalms sufficiently complete for practical purposes, yet free from the technicalities of Hebrew grammar that frequently render such works distasteful to many readers. Consequently all reference to Hebrew words and constructions has been omitted except when really necessary to bring out the correct meaning.

The text of the Latin Vulgate has been taken as a basis because it is the official text of the Church, and because it is the text most familiar to those accustomed to the Divine Office. The text of the Douay Version is also given for the benefit of those who do not know Latin. Both texts are given with the spelling, punctuation, and use of capitals exactly as found in approved editions, but they are divided into strophes and verses according to the meaning. Whenever the Hebrew text differs from the Latin due note of it is made in the explanation, and reference to the Hebrew text is often made to get the true sense of the Latin.

A synopsis of each psalm is given showing at a glance its purpose and general meaning. This is followed by an explanation in which the meaning is usu-

ally brought out by means of a paraphrase. With few exceptions, only the literal sense of the psalm is given because this is the foundation of all other interpretations, and without it they are likely to be forced and fanciful. "A thorough insight into the literal meaning of these spiritual canticles is an essential prerequisite for the due understanding of their liturgical use, and of their prophetic foreshadowings, as well as of their inexhaustible wealth of mystical lore."¹ Having the literal sense for a guide, each one can apply the words of the Psalmist to his own needs, for these inspired songs express sentiments that are universal in their application. Their mingled strains of joyful thanksgiving and praise, of earnest supplication and childlike trust, of unbounded love and heartfelt contrition, should find a response in the heart of each and every one.

The introductory chapter has special regard for readers who have not had the advantage of a course in the science of Introduction to Sacred Scripture; for this reason many things have been explained more at length than would otherwise be necessary.

The author claims nothing original in regard to subject-matter. Works of recognized Scripture scholars have been consulted and the results of their labors adapted to the needs of English readers.

THE AUTHOR.

FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH,
Byesville, Ohio,
March 19, 1914.

¹ M'Swiney.

AUTHORS QUOTED

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COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS	
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¹ Non-Catholic.

COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS

INTRODUCTION

SIGNAL events of Jewish history were frequently celebrated in poetry and song. Debbora sang praises to God for the victory over Jabin and Sisara,¹ and Judith composed a canticle of thanksgiving for the death of Holofernes.² The three youths in the fiery furnace "*praised, and glorified, and blessed God*" with song.³ God even commanded Moses to write a canticle in commemoration of the Law.⁴ We also have the lamentations of David over the death of Saul and Jonathan,⁵ and the canticles of Anna,⁶ Isaias,⁷ Habacuc,⁸ Zacharias,⁹ and the Blessed Virgin.¹⁰

The Law gives no directions regarding the use of music and song in divine worship. David seems to have been the originator of liturgical music. He directed the Levites to appoint singers "*with musical instruments, to wit, on psalteries, and harps, and cym-*

¹ Judges v.

² Dan. iii. 51 et seq.

³ 2 Kings i. 19 et seq.

⁷ Is. xii.

⁸ Luke i. 68 et seq.

² Judith xvi.

⁴ Deut. xxxi. 19.

⁵ 1 Kings ii. 1 et seq.

⁶ Hab. iii.

¹⁰ Luke i. 46 et seq.

*bals, that the joyful noise might resound on high."*¹ He also appointed three choirmasters—Heman, Asaph, and Ethan-Jeduthum.² During his whole reign David seems to have exercised a special care for the praise of God with music and song. At the time of Esdras Temple music was restored "*according to the command of David and of Solomon his son.*"³

"At the dedication of Solomon's Temple the Levites sing and play and the priests sound trumpets,⁴ and at the inauguration of the purified Temple under Hezekiah the music of the Levites and priests sound in concert until all the burnt offerings are laid upon the fire, and then (probably as the wine is being poured on) began (without any further thought of the priests) the song of the Levites.⁵ In the second Temple it was otherwise; the sounding of the trumpets by the priests and the Levitical song with its accompanying music alternated, they were not simultaneous. The congregation did not usually sing with the choir, but only uttered their Amen; nevertheless they joined in the Hallel, and in some psalms after the first clause with its repetition; after the second with hallelujah."⁶

1 *Paral.* xvi. 36 (Hebrew text) indicates that in the time of the first Temple the people were accustomed to sing responses or doxologies at the end of the psalms. "*And all the people said Amen, and praised the Lord.*" *Psalm cxxxv* was evidently intended for responsive singing. Many other psalms have endings that were probably sung by all the people as choruses.

At the time of the second Temple special psalms were assigned to the days of the week and to the

¹ 1 *Paral.* xv. 16.

² 2 *Esd.* xii. 44.

³ 2 *Paral.* xxix. 28.

⁴ 1 *Paral.* xv. 16.

⁵ 2 *Paral.* vii. 6.

⁶ Delitzsch.

various feasts. These psalms were sung at the drink-offering connected with the morning holocaust.¹ It is probable that the choirs sometimes marched around the altar singing while sacrifice was being offered.

The Hallel² (*Ps.* cxii-cxvii) was sung at the Pasch, at Pentecost, the feast of Tabernacles, and on each of the eight days of the dedication anniversary. Later on it was sung at each new moon. At the Pasch the Hallel was sung in the Temple during the immolation of the lamb, and was repeated in the evening by each family during the Paschal meal.³ For this occasion it was divided into two parts. The first part (*Ps.* cxii-cxiii. 1-8) was chanted before the second cup was passed around, i.e., before the actual meal was begun. The second part (*Ps.* cxiii. 9-cxvii.) was reserved for the close of the repast after the lamb had been eaten.⁴

At the feast of Tabernacles and at the Pasch the Hallel was chanted by all the people. Therefore they were well acquainted with these psalms and the joyful acclamations at Christ's entrance into Jerusalem were taken from them, especially from *Ps.* cxvii.

Chanting of psalms formed a notable part of the synagogue service, whence it passed over to the Christian assemblies. In the early days of the Church the singing of psalms played an important part in the non-Eucharistic meetings of the faithful.

¹ Cf. *Ecclus.* i. 20.

² From *halal*, "to praise."

³ M'Swiney, Fouard's "Christ," vol. ii, p. 217, note 3.

⁴ Cf. *Matt.* xxvi. 30: "And a hymn being said they went

From these meetings came the Mass of the catechumens and the office of the breviary.¹ According to the present arrangement of the breviary the entire Psalter is recited practically every week.

Names.—In Hebrew the book of Psalms is headed *tehellim*, praises; songs of praise. This name is not suited to all the psalms; in fact, only one (cxliv) is titled "*A Praise*."

"It is most likely given to the whole collection because the book was a manual of the Temple service of song in which praise was considered as the predominant element. . . . *Tehellim* is derived from a word (*halal*) used in the technical language of the Temple service to designate the execution of jubilant songs of praise to the accompaniment of musical instruments."²

In the Hebrew text of *Ps.* lxxi. 20, the Psalms are called *prayers*—"The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended."

The Vatican Ms. of the Greek Version uses the word *psalmoi* (psalms), from *psallein*—to twang strings, to play on a stringed instrument. Hence *psalmos* originally meant playing on a stringed instrument, but finally came to mean a song sung to the accompaniment of such music. The Alexandrian Ms. uses the word *psalterion* (psalter) which meant a stringed instrument, and then a song sung to its accompaniment. It is now generally used to designate the psalms taken collectively, the Book of Psalms.

¹ Cf. Eucharistic Liturgy, Batiffol's "History of the Breviary."

² Gigot's "Spec. Intro. to Old Testament," pt. 2, p. 56.

Number.—The Hebrew text and the ancient versions all agree in recognizing a total of 150 psalms, but differ in regard to the division and numbering of them. The following table indicates this difference:

Septuagint, Vulgate, and all Catholic Versions		Hebrew Text and all Protestant Versions	
Psalms	1-8	Psalms	1-8
	9		9-10
	10-112		11-113
	113		114-115
	114-115		116
	116-145		117-146
	146-147		147
	148-150		148-150

These differences are probably due to divisions made for liturgical purposes.

Division of the Psalter.—From ancient times the Psalter has been divided into five books, four of which end with a doxology. It is probable that *Ps. cl* was looked upon as the closing doxology of the Psalter, making any special ending for the last book unnecessary.

Various reasons have been given for this five-fold division. Some look upon it as an attempt to liken the Psalter to the Pentateuch—the five books of the Law. Others account for it by assuming that the present Psalter was formed from pre-existing smaller collections of sacred hymns.¹

The following table gives this division of the Psalter with the concluding doxologies:

Book I.—Ps. i-xl.

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel

*From eternity to eternity. So be it. So be it.*²

¹ Gigot, "Introd."

² In Hebrew, "Amen and amen."

Book II.—Ps. xli-lxxi.*Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel**Who alone doth wonderful things.**And blessed be the name of His majesty for ever**And the whole earth shall be filled with His majesty.**So be it. So be it.¹**The praises of David the son of Jesse are ended.***Book III.—Ps. lxxii-lxxxviii.***Blessed be the Lord for evermore.**So be it. So be it.¹***Book IV.—Ps. lxxxix-cv.***Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel**From everlasting to everlasting.**And let all the people say: So be it. So be it.²***Book V.—Ps. cvi-cl.**

Classes.—There can be no clearly marked classification of psalms according to subject-matter or purpose. One and the same psalm is frequently a mingling of prayer and thanksgiving, of exhortation and instruction, of history and prophecy. The following classes may be more or less clearly defined:

- I. Elegiac.—Plaintive and penitential psalms. Most psalms belong in some measure to this class.
- II. Eucharistic.—Psalms of thanksgiving.
- III. Didactic.—Psalms intended to instruct in doctrine or morals.
- IV. Historical.—Psalms that review in a summary manner the chief events in the history of Israel.
- V. Messianic or Prophetic.—Psalms that refer literally, or at least typically, to Christ and His Church.

“It is usual to speak of certain psalms as being Messianic. This is of course true, but it is sometimes

¹ In Hebrew, “*Amen and amen.*”

² In Hebrew, “*Amen allelujah.*”

misleading, for in a very true sense the whole Psalter is Messianic. That the Hebrews so regarded it will be evident from a study of the quotations in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In proof of the Messianic character of Jesus, psalms are there quoted which we should not have otherwise regarded as Messianic. The Psalter is an expression of Israel's Messianic hopes. It is in no sense an historical book; it is a prayer-book, and as such is timeless. Perhaps it would be no exaggeration to say that hardly a single psalm can be dated with certainty. The allusions to contemporary or past events are shadowy because they are not referred to for their own sake, but for the lesson they teach. While insisting upon the Messianic character of the whole Psalter as embodying the hopes of Israel, we must not shut our eyes to the fact that certain psalms are Messianic in a more striking way than others. Thus we have a whole series of what we may call 'King' psalms.¹ In these no individual king is mentioned, or apparently even thought of. It is always the ideal king, the perfect ruler set before us as a reality; he will one day rule. Frequently the Psalmist seems to look beyond the shadowy king of whom he speaks and addresses Him whom the former in some sense typifies. Only in this way can we explain such passages as the following: 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever!'² These words are addressed to a king who has been spoken of from a purely human standpoint in the first part of the psalm."³

¹ E.g., Ps. ii, xvii, xix, xx, xliv, etc.

² Ps. xliv. 7.

³ Adapted from Father Pope's "Aids to the Bible," pp. 282-284.

Titles.—Most psalms have inscriptions or titles of high antiquity. They show great diversity, but are mainly of four kinds:

- I. Those indicating the author or collection, v.g., *to David, to Asaph.*
- II. Those giving liturgical or musical directions, v.g., *to the chief musician, on stringed instruments, for the Sabbath day.*
- III. Those indicating the occasion, or historical setting of the psalm, v.g., *when he fled from the face of his son Absalom, for the words of Chusi the son of Jemini.*
- IV. Those descriptive of the psalms, v.g., *Mizmor* (psalm), *shir* (song), *maschil, michlam.*

Many modern interpreters reject these titles as spurious and worthless. Briggs, Delitzsch, Ewald, and other Protestant scholars have made considerable use of them in determining the author of the Psalms, their occasion and liturgical use. While not insisting that the author of the Psalms prefixed the titles Catholic scholars have always considered them an integral part of Holy Scripture.¹ This is in accord with a recent decree of the Biblical Commission.² In responses of May 1, 1910, the Commission declared that we may rightly conclude from the agreement of the Hebrew text with the Septuagint and other ancient versions that the titles prefixed to the psalms in the Hebrew text are older than the

¹ Cf. Walter Drum, S.J., in "Cath. Encyc.," art. "Psalms."

² A committee of cardinals and consultors created by Leo XIII. in 1902. Their duty is to protect and defend the integrity of the Faith in Biblical matters, and to further the progress of Biblical studies. Cf. "Cath. Encyc." art. "Biblical Commission."

Septuagint version. If they were not prefixed by the very authors of the psalms, they come down to us at least from an ancient Jewish tradition, and are not to be rejected except for weighty reasons.

The meaning of the various titles will be considered in connection with the psalms to which they belong.

Selah.—Somewhat allied to the titles is the term *selah* found in several psalms and in Habacuc. The meaning of the word is unknown. The Septuagint renders it *diapsalma*, a word equally unknown. Etymologically, *diapsalma* would be derived from *dia-psallein* as dialogue from *dia-legein*. It might mean an interlude. *Selah* is generally considered a musical direction of some sort. Some maintain that it served the same purpose as the *rest* in modern music. Others think that it marks the place for an instrumental interlude. Briggs takes it as an imperative from *salal*, to lift up (the voice of praise), and says that "it indicates that a benediction might be sung after the pericope thus designated." The Vulgate omits it entirely.

Authors.—Both Jewish and Christian tradition is undecided in regard to the authorship of the Psalms. In one place (*Pesachim*) the Talmud attributes them all to David. In another place (*Baba Bathra*) ten different authors are mentioned. St. Augustine and many other Fathers considered David the author of the entire collection. Origen, Eusebius, and many others held to a plurality of authors. Some modern scholars maintain that few, if any, of the psalms belong to David. 2 Kings xxii shows beyond a doubt that he was the author of at least one psalm.

On May 1, 1910, the Biblical Commission decreed as follows:

- (1) Neither the wording of the decrees of councils nor the opinion of certain Fathers have such weight as to determine that David is the sole author of the whole Psalter.
- (2) It cannot be prudently denied that David is the principal author of the songs of the Psalter.
- (3) In particular, it cannot be denied that David is the author of those Psalms which are clearly cited under his name in the Old or New Testament, v.g., *Ps.* ii, xv, xvii, xxxi. lxviii, cix. (Vulgate.)

In the Hebrew text seventy-three psalms are apparently attributed to David, twelve to Asaph, and twelve to the Corite family. Moses, Solomon, and Ethan are also mentioned. The Septuagint and Vulgate assign eighty-five psalms to David. All versions agree on the Davidic authorship of sixty-nine psalms.

In Hebrew the ascription reads, "*to David*," "*to Asaph*," etc. The Septuagint renders it by a genitive of possession. The Vulgate gives it literally, "*ipsi David*." The Douay Version has "*of David*" and "*for David*."

It is now generally admitted that these titles sometimes refer to a collection of psalms instead of indicating the author. "*To David*" may mean that the psalm in question was written by David. It may also mean that it belongs to a collection of psalms that are mostly Davidic. "*To the sons of Core*" must mean that there was a collection of psalms composed by various members of the Corite family. Otherwise it would follow that all the members of

that family collaborated in the production of each psalm so inscribed. "*To the director*" may also point to a collection of psalms intended for the use of the choirmaster in liturgical services.

Origin of the Psalter.—The Psalter is made up of psalms composed at various times extending over a period of at least five centuries. Therefore it is evident that these psalms were not all collected by the same hand. "The ancient division of the Hebrew Psalter into five books, which has already been described, is most naturally accounted for by supposing that the book of Psalms in its present state was formed out of pre-existing smaller collections of sacred hymns."¹ The fact that we find the same psalm in different books shows that there was more than one collector. For example, *Ps.* xiii of Book I is repeated in Book II as *Ps.* lii.

While we know that there were various collections of psalms, we have only conjectures to guide us in determining the date and the editor of them. In regard to the collections represented by the five books of the Psalter, Van Steenkiste says: "The first collector probably intended to bring together into one book all the psalms of David. The second editor supplemented this work by adding several other hymns. The collector of the third book edited a number of psalms by Asaph and by members of the Corite family. This collection was joined to the former books after noting that it was not the work of David. '*The praises of David the son of Jesse are ended.*' The editor of the fourth book made a collection of psalms that are mostly anonymous. Afterward the editor of the fifth book gathered into a final

¹ Gigot, Intro.

collection all the sacred hymns not found in the previous collections.”¹

Catholic scholars generally maintain that the Psalter was reduced to its present form by Esdras at the time of the restoration. Many Protestant authors and some few Catholics² maintain that several psalms belong to the time of the Machabees and that the Psalter could not have been completed before that time. Some even hold that the larger part of the Psalter belongs to that period. In the responses of May 1, 1910, the Biblical Commission declared that our Psalter does not contain many Machabean psalms. It does not deny that *some* psalms *may* be Machabean. The question is an open one.

The Hebrew text as we have it to-day is known as the Massoretic text, i.e. the text determined and handed down by the Massoretes³ or masters of tradition. We have no pre-Massoretic Mss. of the Psalms and no Mss. of the Massoretic text earlier than the ninth century. “The study of the rhythmic structure of the Psalms, together with the variations between the Massorah and the versions, have made it clear that our Hebrew text is far from perfect and that our points are often wrong.”⁴

The original text was written with consonants only; the vowels had to be supplied by the reader. In order to preserve the traditional reading a system

¹ Freely translated from “*Intro. in Librum Psalmorum.*”

² Palmieri believes that at least *Ps.* lxxiv (Vulg.) is Machabean. Minocchi enumerates *Ps.* v, lxxv, lxxx, cxix, cxlix, (Vulg.) as belonging to that period.

³ From *massorah*, “tradition.”

⁴ Walter Drum, S.J. in “*Cath. Encyc.*”

of vowel and accent marks was invented by the Masoretes. To avoid any change in the text these marks were simply placed above or below the consonants to which they belonged. A text supplied with these markings is known as a pointed text.

The introduction of vowel points is usually placed between the sixth and eighth centuries of our era. It is certain that St. Jerome (end of the fifth century) knew nothing of a pointed text.

These points are of great value because they preserve the traditional reading of the Hebrew text; yet they are not of such importance that we must accept them in all instances. The Septuagint Version clearly indicates readings differing from that given by the present pointings.

Septuagint Version.—The earliest and most important translation of the Psalms is found in the Greek Version of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint¹ or Alexandrian Version. According to an ancient tradition this version was made at Alexandria under Ptolemy Philadelphus, about the year 285 B. C. Perhaps nothing more than the Pentateuch was translated at that time. The Prologue to Ecclesiasticus seems to intimate that the Greek Version of the other Hebrew Scriptures was already completed when Jesus, a grandson² of the author, undertook the translation of that book (about 130 B. C.).

The oldest Mss. of the Septuagint Version date from the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era. One known as the Vatican Codex (Codex B) is

¹ So called because pseudo-Aristeas asserts that it was made by seventy-two (*septuaginta duo*) learned Jews sent from Palestine.

preserved in the Vatican Library at Rome; another, known as the Sinaitic Codex (Codex \aleph), is partly at Leipzig and partly at St. Petersburg. A third, known as the Alexandrian Codex (Codex A), is now in the British Museum, London.

The importance of the Septuagint Version is evident when we remember (1) that it was derived from a text many centuries older and probably much purer than the Massoretic text; (2) that many ancient versions were derived from it; (3) that with few exceptions the quotations found in the New Testament are taken from it.

Characteristics of the Septuagint Version.—The different books are of unequal merit, showing that they are the work of different translators. The Psalms are severely literal, retaining constructions, and even conjunctions and prepositions, entirely foreign to Greek syntax. The two forms of the Hebrew verb (perfect and imperfect) are usually rendered as simple past or future tenses. Nevertheless we find some noteworthy departures from this slavish rendering of the original text. The many bold figures in reference to God are toned down or entirely eliminated. Where the Hebrew text calls God “a rock,” “a shield,” “a high tower,” etc., the Septuagint refers to Him as a protector or defender. This was probably done to prevent Gentile readers from misunderstanding the spiritual nature of Israel’s God. Pronouns used as the subject or object in a sentence are frequently changed to the name of the person or thing referred to. “*Yahveh*,”¹ the covenant name of God, is always translated “*Lord*.”

¹ Usually written “*Jehovah*.”

Other Greek Versions.—Christ and His apostles made free use of the Septuagint Version when quoting the Old Testament. Later on Christian writers used it in their controversies with the Jews. As a consequence, the Jews began to look upon it with suspicion and finally rejected it. They declared that the day the seventy translated the Law was as sorrowful for Israel as the day the golden calf was made. Attempts were then made to supply a Greek text more acceptable to Jewish readers. Aquila¹ was the first to take up this task. His translation appeared about 130 A. D., and was favorably received by the Jews. His translation was extremely literal. A little later in the same century another Greek translation was brought out by Theodotion, a Jewish proselyte. His work was little more than a thorough revision of the Septuagint; consequently it found little favor among the Jews, but was well received by the Christians; in fact, Theodotion's version of Daniel has supplanted the Septuagint in the Christian canon of the Old Testament.

About 200 A.D., Symmachus, an Ebionite, made a third Greek version of the Hebrew text. St. Jerome greatly admired this work, and used it freely in the preparation of the Vulgate. It was never popular among the Jews.

The Chaldaic Targums.—When Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language it became necessary to explain the sacred text in the language of the people.² At first there was simply an oral interpretation, or paraphrase, of the text that had been read.³ Later these

¹ Thought to be identical with *Onkelos*, whose name is connected with the Targum on the Pentateuch.

² Cf. Eucharistic Liturgy, p. 74.

³ Cf. Nehemias viii. 9.

paraphrases were committed to writing and are known as Targums. "Targum" probably means "translation" or "interpretation."

Hexapla.—In their controversies with the Jews Christian writers were naturally compelled to use only such Scriptural passages as were recognized by their adversaries. The Septuagint differed from the Hebrew text in many places, and the varied readings were multiplied by the mistakes of copyists. Consequently Christian apologists were frequently at a loss to know whether or not certain passages were found in the Hebrew text. To remedy this Origen brought out a work showing at a glance the relation of the Hebrew text with the various Greek versions. The text and versions were arranged in six parallel columns, hence the name *Hexapla*. The first column gave the Hebrew text in Hebrew characters. The second column gave the same Hebrew text in Greek characters. Aquila's version was placed in the third column; that of Symmachus in the fourth; the Septuagint revised by Origen in the fifth; and the version of Theodotion in the sixth. Only some parts of this stupendous work have come down to us.

The Old Itala.—The oldest Latin version of the Psalms—a literal rendering of the Septuagint—is found in the Old Itala Version, which was probably made in Africa in the second century.

The Roman Psalter.—At the request of Pope Damasus, St. Jerome made a rather hasty revision of the Old Itala version of the Psalms. For this purpose he used the commonly received text of the Septuagint. This revision was made at Rome in 383, and is known as the Roman Psalter. It is still used at St. Peter's in Rome, in the cathedral of Milan, and in

St. Mark's, Venice. The Invitatory (*Ps.* xciv), the antiphons, and the responses of the breviary; the gradual of the Mass and the other parts of psalms found in the missal are taken from the Roman Psalter.

The Gallican Psalter.—In 388 St. Jerome made a more thorough revision of the Psalter, using Origen's text of the Septuagint. This work was first adopted in Gaul, and is therefore known as the Gallican Psalter. It is the Psalter now found in the Latin Vulgate.

A few years later St. Jerome made a new translation of the Psalter directly from the Hebrew. It is an improvement over the Roman and Gallican Psalters, but was never widely used.

Peculiarities of the Latin Psalter.—As noted above, the Psalter of the Latin Vulgate is only a revision of the Old Itala Version which in turn was a literal translation of the Septuagint. Therefore it is only natural that Hebraisms and imperfect renderings of the Hebrew verb, together with many Grecisms, should find their way into our Latin Psalter. These peculiarities will be noted as they occur in the Psalms. Those of more frequent occurrence are noted here for the sake of convenience and brevity.¹ They may be divided into three classes:

- (a) Those due to the influence of Hebrew.
- (b) Those due to the influence of Greek.
- (c) Those due to the use of impure Latin.

¹ Translated freely from Van Steenkiste's "*Intro. in Librum Psalmorum.*"

Peculiarities Largely Due to Hebrew Influence.

Case.—Hebrew has no case endings. One form of the word is used for all cases. This occasioned frequent use of the nominative and accusative absolute in the Latin text:

"Dominus in cælo sedes ejus," i.e., *"In cælo est sedes Domini"* (Ps. x. 5).

The dative is frequently used for the accusative or ablative:

"Dilatasti mihi (me)" (Ps. iv. 2); *"Multi dicunt animæ meæ,"* i.e., *"de anima mea"* (Ps. iii. 3).

In with the ablative is used for the accusative:

"In nomine Dei invocabimus," i.e., *"nomen Dei invocabimus"* (Ps. xix. 8).

Number.—The plural is frequently used to denote magnitude or excellence. This is the so-called plural of majesty:

"Siccasti fluvios (i.e., fluvium) Ethan" (Ps. lxxiii. 15).

We also find the singular used for the plural:

"Venit locusta et bruchus, cujus, non erat numerus" (Ps. civ. 34).

Gender.—Hebrew has no neuter gender; the feminine is used instead. This peculiarity has also found its way into the Vulgate:

"Unam petiî a Domino, hanc requiram" (Ps. xxi. 4).

Adjectives.—Hebrew is poor in adjectives. A noun in the genitive case or with a preposition is often used in their stead:

"*Homo pacis*" for "*homo pacificus*," "*Viri divitiarum*" for "*divites*," "*Conventicula de sanguinibus*" for "*conventicula sanguinea*."

The noun is sometimes repeated:

"*Homo et homo*" for "*multi homines*," "*In corde et corde*" for "*duplici corde*."

An abstract noun is frequently used for an adjective:

"*Justitiam*" for "*justi*," "*iniquitas*" for "*iniqui*."

Comparison of Adjectives.—Hebrew has no form for the comparison of adjectives. The comparative is formed by the use of an adverb or preposition, or by the use of the positive form of the adjective followed by *min* (from) which the Vulgate renders by *ab* or *quam*:

"*Bonum* (*melius*) *est confidere in Domino quam confidere in homine*" (Ps. cxvii. 8).

"*Super inimicos meos prudentem*," i.e., "*inimicis meis prudentiorem*" (Ps. cxviii. 98).

"*Paulo minus ab angelis*" (Ps. viii. 6).

The superlative is formed (a) by the use of adverbs; (b) by reduplication; (c) by the use of such words as *primogenitus*, *adeps*, *medulla*, *Dei*, etc.

"*Merces tua magna nimis*."

"*Saecula saeculorum*," which is equivalent to our phrase, "*for ever and ever*."

"*Cibavit eos ex adipe frumenti*," i.e., "*frumento pinguiissimo*."

"*Montes Dei; cervi Dei*," i.e., "*montes altissimi; cervi altissimæ*."

Moods and Tenses.—Hebrew has but two tense forms—perfect and imperfect. These forms express

action instead of time. The perfect expresses completed action and includes all perfect tenses of other languages: perfect and pluperfect (indicative and subjunctive) and future perfect. The imperfect denotes unfinished action and includes all imperfect tenses of other languages: present (especially for general truths), imperfect, and future.¹ In the Vulgate these forms are usually translated as simple tenses, past or future. We must determine from the context which tense should be used. The present tense is frequently expressed by a participle:

"*Faciens* (i.e., *facit*) *misericordiam Christo suo David.*" (Ps. xvii. 57).

The moods are also defectively rendered. The indicative is frequently used instead of the imperative or subjunctive, and the subjunctive instead of the indicative:

"*Corripiet me justus*" for "*corripiat me justus*" (Ps. cxl. 5).

"*Mane sicut herba transeat*" for "*transit*" (Ps. lxxxix. 6).

Prepositions are frequently used in a sense entirely foreign to Latin. This peculiarity frequently obscures the meaning.

A = coram. "*Tenebrae non obscurabuntur a te*" (Ps. cxxxviii. 12).

A = propter. "*Rugiebam a gemitu cordis*" (Ps. xxxvii. 9).

A = prater. "*A te quid volui*" (Ps. lxxii).

Ad = apud. "*Ad meipsum anima mea conturbata est*" (Ps. xli. 7).

Adversus, contra = coram. "*Peccatum meum contra me est semper,*" i.e., "*coram oculis meis*" (Ps. l. 5)

¹ Cf. Davidson's Hebrew Grammar, p. 52.

Cum = *sicut*. "*Peccavimus cum patribus nostris*," i.e., "*sicut patres nostri*" (Ps. cv. 6).

De = *genitive*. "*Considerabo mirabilia de lege tua*," i.e., "*mirabilia legis tue*" (Ps. cxviii. 18).

De = *accusative*. "*Adorabunt de ipso*," i.e., "*ipsum adorabunt*" (Ps. lxxi. 15).

De = *propter*. "*De execratione . . . annuntiabuntur*" Ps. (lviii. 13).

De = *a*. "*Vide humilitatem meam de inimicis meis*," i.e., "*vide quantum humiliatus sim ab inimicis meis*" (Ps. ix. 14).

In = *cum*. "*Introibo . . . in holocaustis*" (Ps. lxxv. 13).

In = *de*. "*In* (i.e., *de*) *insurgentibus in me audiet auris mea*" (Ps. xci. 12).

In = *ablative*. "*Reges eos in virga ferrea*" (Ps. ii. 9).

In = *propter*. "*Non erubescant in me*" (Ps. lxviii. 7).

Secundum = *in*. "*Secundum diem tentationis*" (Ps. xciv. 9).

Super = *contra*. "*Munera super innocentem accipere*" (Ps. cxlii. 4).

Conjunctions.

Aulem = *et*. "*Timeat Dominum omnis terra, ab eo autem commoveantur omnes inhabitantes orbem*" (Ps. xxxii. 8).

Etenim = *et*. "*Junior fui; etenim senui*" (Ps. xxxvi. 25).

Quoniam = *quando*. "*Quoniam videbo cælos*" (Ps. viii. 4).

Quia and *quoniam* are frequently redundant.

Peculiarities Due to Greek Influence.—Many Greek words are simply transliterated: v.g., *synagoga* (*cætus*), *ecclesia* (*cætus*), *cleros* (*sortes*), *christus* (*unctus*). Words and phrases are sometimes used as in Greek, v.g.,

In excelso loqui = *superbe, elate loqui*.

Legem ponere = *instituere, docere*.

Exerceri = *meditari*. "*In mandatis tuis exercebor*" (Ps. cxviii. 15).

In idipsum = *simul, pariter*. "*In idipsum dormiam et requiescam*" (Ps. iv. 9).

Quia and *quoniam* are used as the Greek *ὅτι*. "*Scit cogitationes hominum quoniam vanæ sunt*," i.e., "*scit cogitationes hominum vanas esse*" (Ps. xciii. 11). The verbs are also construed as in Greek: "*Insidiatur . . . rapere pauperum*," i.e., "*ut rapiat pauperem*" Ps. x. 9); "*In conveniendo populos in unum*," i.e., "*cum populi simul convenirent*" (Ps. ci. 23).

The case, number, and gender of the Greek is often retained in the Latin: "*Judica Domine, nocentes me*" (*mihi*) (Ps. xxxiv. 1); "*Transferentur montes in cor maris, sonuerunt aquæ eorum*." The Greek *θλασων* is plural, hence *eorum* instead of *ejus* (Ps. xlv. 3-4).

Peculiarities Due to the Use of Impure Latin.—Many words are used in a sense quite different from that of classical Latin.

Confiteri = *laudare*. "*Quis confitebitur tibi?*" (Ps. vi. 6).

Corrigere = *erigere, constituere*. "*Correxit orbem terræ*" (Ps. xc. 10).

Decidere ab inimicis = "*cadere coram inimicis*" (Ps. vii. 5).

Dilatare = *recreare, sublevare*. "*In tribulatione dilatasti mihi*" (Ps. iv. 2).

Distinguere = *distincte exprimere*. "*Vota mea quæ distinxerunt labia mea*" (Ps. lxxv. 13).

Emigrabit te = *emigrare te faciet* (Ps. li. 7).

Gratis=*immerito, sine causa*. "*Gratis absconderunt mihi interitum*" (Ps. xxxiv. 7).

Laudari=*glorari*. "*Laudatur peccator in desideriis animæ suæ*" (Ps. ix. (x) 3).

Meditari=*loqui*. "*Os iusti meditabitur sapientiam*" (Ps. xxxvi. 30).

Mortificare=*occidere*. "*Quæret mortificare eum*" (Ps. xxxvi. 32).

Præparare=*statuere, stabilire*. "*Præparare montes, thronum,*" etc.

Salutaris=*salvator*. "*Deus salutaris meus*" (Ps. xxvi. 9).

Salutare=*auxilium, salus, liberatio*, "*Exultabit cor meum in salutari tuo*" (Ps. xii. 6).

Spiritus=*ventus, flatus*. (Ps. xxii. 6).

Surgere, resurgere=*stare*. (Ps. i. 5; xix. 9; xxiv. 3).

Suscipere=*expectare, sperare*. "*Qui sustinent te non confundentur*" (Ps. xxiv. 3).

English Version.—Many Anglo-Saxon and English versions of the Psalter appeared between Guthlac's interlinear translation (seventh century) and Wyclif's English Bible (end of fourteenth century). These versions were all made from the Latin Vulgate which had been brought to England by Roman and Irish missionaries.

The English Psalters in general use to-day are found in the Catholic and Protestant versions known respectively as the Douay and Authorized (or King James) Version.

Douay Version.—The original Douay Version was due to the religious controversies of the sixteenth century. Many Protestant versions had been issued and were widely used for polemical purposes. Theological bias was responsible for the corruption of many texts which made it necessary for English

Catholics to have a version of their own. Cardinal Allen and his associates at the English College of Douay in Flanders took up the work of translating the Latin Vulgate into English. The Old Testament was published at Douay in 1609–10.¹ The work had been completed nearly thirty years before, but lack of funds delayed its publication. In the prefaces the translators stated that their aim was to give a precise and close rendering of the Vulgate, “nothing being here either untruly or obscurely done of purpose in favour of the Catholike Roman religion, so that we can not but complaine and challenge English Protestants for corrupting the text . . . which they profess to translate.” Scrivener writes: “It must be observed that no case of wilful perversion of the Scripture has ever been brought home to the Rhemish translators.” Unfortunately this desire of accuracy in rendering the Latin text prevented the authors from utilizing the Greek and Hebrew texts as much as they might have done. They also retained many words and expressions that really need translating.²

In 1749 Dr. Challoner published a revised edition of the Douay Version that was little short of a new translation. His diction and phraseology resemble that of the Authorized Version. Many revisions of the Douay Bible have been published from time to time, but so far as the Old Testament is concerned they all retain practically the text of Dr. Challoner.

The Authorized Version.—During the Reformation in England many translations were made directly

¹The New Testament had been published at Rheims in 1582.

²Cf. Gigot.

from the Greek and Hebrew texts. The most noted of these were Tyndale's Bible (1525), Coverdale's Bible (1535), and Matthew's Bible (1537). In 1539-41 Coverdale made a revision of Matthew's Bible. On account of its size, this revision is known as the Great Bible. It is also known as Cromwell's Bible, because he prescribed its use in the churches. A revision of the Great Bible made in 1568 is known as the Bishops' Bible because part of the revisers were bishops.

Many of the translations and revisions were made by men unqualified for the task and biased by theological prejudices. Even Protestants became dissatisfied with them. At the conference of the Conformists and Puritans, held at Hampton Court in 1604, Dr. Reynolds, leader of the Puritans, suggested the advisability of a new translation of the Bible because the "versions allowed in the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI were corrupt and not answerable to the truth of the original."

James I became interested in the project, and appointed a commission to undertake the work. This commission took up the work of revision in 1607, using the Bishops' Bible as their basis. They completed their work in two years and nine months, and the first edition was brought out in 1611, only a short time after the publication of the Douay Version of the Old Testament. The Authorized Version owes its name to the words found on the title page: "Appointed to be read in the Churches." It is also known as King James' Version because it was prepared by his authority and dedicated to him. From a literary standpoint the Authorized Version is a masterpiece. Considered as a translation, it is a

great improvement over all its predecessors; so much so in fact that Dr. Challoner did not hesitate to make use of it in his revision of the Douay Bible. There are still some traces of doctrinal bias. Robert Gill, chaplain to Archbishop Abbot, one of the revisers, tells us "that dogmatic interests were in some cases allowed to bias the translation, and the Calvinism of one party, the prelatic views of another, were both represented at the expense of accuracy."¹

Revised Version.—In 1872 a committee of about eighty British and American scholars began a revision of the Authorized Version. After ten years' work the New Testament was published in 1881, and the whole Bible in 1885. As regards the Old Testament, "alterations of the Authorized Version are much more numerous in interpretation and language than in text, but it can not be denied that in most changes, especially as regards the interpretation of the prophetic and poetical books, the revisers were particularly happy."² An American edition of the Revised Version was published in 1900–01.

Hebrew Poetry.—All poetry is hedged about by some sort of measure and rhythm. In Greek and Latin rhythm depends upon the quantity of the component syllables; in the Germanic and Slavic languages it depends upon accent; in French, on the number of syllables. Hebrew poetry finds its chief characteristic in a rhythm of sentences and ideas, known as parallelism. Bishop Lowth was first to bring out this feature of Hebrew poetry. He describes it as follows: "The correspondence of one verse or line with another, I call parallelism. When a proposition is delivered and a second is subjoined

¹ Quoted by Gigot.

² Gigot.

to it, or drawn under it, equivalent, or contrasted with it in sense, or similar to it in grammatical construction, these I call parallel lines; and the words or phrases answering to one another in the corresponding lines, parallel terms." ¹ This particular feature of Hebrew poetry is sufficient "to discriminate in general the parts of the Hebrew Scriptures which are written in verse from those which are written in prose." ¹

Three kinds of parallelism are described by Lowth: synonymous, antithetic, synthetic.

Synonymous Parallelism.—When parallel lines express the same idea in different forms or in different words, with some slight modification of meaning, we have a synonymous parallelism:

*"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?
Or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?"* (Ps. viii. 5).

A parallelism usually has two members, but not unfrequently three or four, and even five or six:

*"Blessed is the man
who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly,
nor stood in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the chair of pestilence"* (Ps. i. 1).

Note the gradation of meaning expressed by the words *walk, stand, sit*.

*"Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night,
nor for the arrow that flieth by day.
For the pestilence that walketh in darkness;
for the destruction that layeth waste at noonday"*
(Ps. xc. 5-6).

¹ Bishop Lowth as quoted by Gigot.

The arrangement of members in the above parallelism is noteworthy. The first and third mention the dangers of the night; the second and fourth those of the day. The first and second members refer to dangers from enemies; the third and fourth to calamities sent by God.¹

In the three-membered parallelism the first or third member is frequently parallel to the other two:

*"Her have I loved, and have sought her out from my youth,
and have desired to take her for my spouse,
and I became a lover of her beauty" (Wis. viii. 2).*

In this verse "*Her have I loved*" is parallel to the third line, and "*I sought her out from my youth,*" to the second.

*"With his pinions shall he cover thee,
and under his wings thou shalt take refuge.
A shield and a buckler is his truth" (Ps. xc. 4).*

In the four-membered parallelism the first line may be parallel to the third, and the second to the fourth; or the first and fourth and the second and third may be parallel:

*"The Lord is my light and my salvation,
Whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the protector of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?" (Ps. xxvi. 1.)*

*"My son, if thy mind be wise,
my heart shall rejoice with thee:
And my reins shall rejoice,
When thy lips shall speak what is right" (Prov. xxiii. 15-16).*

¹ Cornely.

A synonymous parallelism may consist of a positive and a negative member:

*"I have kept the way of the Lord;
And have not done wickedly against my God"*
(Ps. xvii. 22).

Antithetical Parallelism.—This is a parallelism in which the thought of one member is emphasized by contrast with that of the other. It is necessarily limited to two members, which may be single lines, other parallelisms, or strophes:

*"For the Lord knoweth the way of the just;
And the way of the wicked shall perish"* (Ps. i. 6).

*"I have seen the wicked highly exalted,
And lifted up like the cedars of Libanus.
And I have passed by, and lo, he was not:
And I sought him and his place was not found"*
(Ps. xxxvi. 35-36).

In Ps. i. verses 4-5 are opposed to verses 1-2.

Synonymous and antithetical parallelisms are joined in various ways:

*"He hath put down the mighty from their seat
and hath exalted the humble.
He hath filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he hath sent empty away"*
(Luke i. 52-53).

Synthetic or Constructive Parallelism.—In this form of parallelism one member explains, proves, or in some manner completes the thought expressed in the other. The members usually correspond to one another in proportion and construction:

*"And let them trust in Thee who know Thy name:
for Thou hast not forsaken them that seek Thee"*
(Ps. ix. 11).

*"Thou wilt turn, O Lord, and bring us to life:
and Thy people shall rejoice in Thee"*
(Ps. lxxxiv. 7).

*"They have opened their mouths against me
as a lion ravening and roaring"* (Ps. xxi. 14).

Climactic Parallelism.—This is "found only in lyric poetry, and consists chiefly in this: the first line is itself incomplete, and the second takes up words from it and completes the sense."¹

*"The voice of the Lord shaketh the desert:
and the Lord shall shake the desert of Cades"*
(Ps. xxviii. 8).

*"The Lord who is strong and mighty:
the Lord mighty in battle"* (Ps. xxiii. 8).

Parallelisms are a great help in determining the meaning of obscure passages. What is obscurely or figuratively stated in one member is frequently explained or clearly expressed in the other:

*"Know ye also that the Lord hath made His holy one
wonderful:
the Lord will hear when I cry unto Him"*
(Ps. iv. 4).

Taking the first line by itself we could not determine the meaning of *His holy one*. The next member of the parallelism shows that it refers to David, the beloved of God—the one devoted to Him by the kingly anointing.

*"And His place is in peace:
and His abode in Sion"* (Ps. lxxv. 3).

¹ Gigot.

In this passage, *in peace* and *in Sion* are parallel terms; consequently *peace* must mean Salem (peace), the ancient name of Jerusalem.

We are frequently enabled to determine the true reading of a passage by means of the parallel member. In the Vulgate *Ps. xxi. 17c-18a* reads:

*"They have dug my hands and my feet:
they have numbered all my bones."*

Instead of "*they have dug*" (*kaaru*) the present Hebrew text reads, "*like a lion (kâarî)*." The parallelism shows that the Vulgate has the correct reading.

Verse.—The principle of versification in Hebrew poetry remains unknown despite the many theories that have been proposed. Philo and Josephus say that Hebrew poetry, like that of Greece and Rome, is measured by the quantity¹ of the syllables. Many Fathers and ecclesiastical writers followed their opinion. St. Gregory of Nyssa seems to have been the first to reject this view. "Sir William Jones endeavored to apply the rules of Arabic meter to Hebrew. But this soon betrayed him into a total rejection of the Massoretic system of orthography and accentuation, and into conclusions which are far from satisfactory."²

Gustav Bickell tried to explain Hebrew verse by means of the Syriac. According to his theory each verse contains a certain number of syllables, regardless of quantity. They are so arranged that accented and unaccented syllables follow one another in regular order. This gives rise to iambic and trochaic feet only.

¹ i.e., whether long or short.

² Gigot.

Another theory attempts to explain Hebrew verse after the manner of the Babylonian and Egyptian. Dr. Briggs of New York was the leading advocate of this theory. The measures are "not of feet, as in classic Latin and Greek, or of syllables as in Syriac poetry; but of words and word accents, as in Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian, and the most ancient poetry of other nations." "Three beats of the accent give us trimeters, four tetrameters, five pentameters, and six hexameters."¹

Strophe or Stanza.—A number of verses expressing a relatively complete idea is called a strophe or stanza, although it has not the regular construction that characterizes a strophe of the Greek or Latin ode.

Strophes are usually related to one another in the same manner as the members of a parallelism, i.e., synonymously, antithetically, and synthetically.

Refrains.—Many psalms have verses that are repeated after the manner of a refrain. Two of these are found in *Ps. cvi.*

*"And they cried to the Lord in their tribulation:
and He delivered them out of their distress"*
(verses 6, 13, 19, 28).

*"Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to Him:
and His wonderful works to the children of men"*
(verses 8, 15, 21, 31).

Some psalms begin and end with a refrain. Thus, v.g., *Ps. viii* opens and closes with the words:

"O Lord our Lord, how admirable is Thy name in the whole earth."

These refrains were probably intended for responsive singing. One choir sang the psalm and another

¹ Briggs.

choir, or the people, responded with the refrain. Sometimes a response was sung to each verse after the manner of a litany. *Ps.* cxxxv was evidently intended to be sung in this manner.

Epiphonema.—Several psalms have endings which seem to have been sung as a chorus by the people or by the choirs. Such an ending is known as an *epiphonema*. Cf. *Ps.* ii, vii, xvii, etc.

Alphabetical Psalms.—There are a few psalms in which each verse or group of verses begins with a different letter in alphabetical order. This feature may have been adopted to aid the memory. *Ps.* xxiv, xxxiii, cx, cxi, cxviii, cxliv, and probably *Ps.* ix are alphabetical.

PSALMUS I

1 Beatus vir qui non abiit in
consilio impiorum,

et in via peccatorum non
stetit,
et in cathedra pestilentiae non
sedit;

2 Sed in lege Domini voluntas
ejus,
et in lege ejus meditabitur die
ac nocte.

3 Et erit tamquam lignum quod
plantatum est secus decur-
sus aquarum,
quod fructum suum dabit in
tempore suo;
Et folium ejus non defluet;
et omnia quaecumque faciet
prosperabuntur.

4 Non sic impii, non sic;
sed tamquam pulvis quem
projicit ventus a facie ter-
rae.

5 Ideo non resurgent impii in
judicio,
neque peccatores in consilio
justorum,

6 Quoniam novit Dominus viam
justorum;
et iter impiorum peribit.

PSALM I

1 Blessed is the man who hath
not walked in the counsel
of the ungodly,
nor stood in the way of sin-
ners,
nor sat in the chair of pesti-
lence:

2 But his will is in the law of
the Lord,
and on his law he shall medi-
tate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree
which is planted near the
running waters,
which shall bring forth its
fruit, in due season.
And his leaf shall not fall off:
and all whatsoever he shall
do shall prosper.

4 Not so the wicked, not so:
but like the dust, which the
wind driveth from the face
of the earth.

5 Therefore the wicked shall not
rise again in judgment:
nor sinners in the council of
the just.

6 For the Lord knoweth the
way of the just:
and the way of the wicked
shall perish.

PSALM I

THIS Psalm is didactic and forms a fitting introduction to the Psalter. It teaches that true happiness can be found only in the observance of God's laws. This is the fundamental idea of the whole book of Psalms.

The author is unknown. Many believe it to be the work of David, while others ascribe it to some collector of the Psalms.

Synopsis.—Thrice happy the man who avoids evil (1), and does good (2). He shall be like a fruitful tree (3). The fortunes of the wicked shall be different (4, 5), because God rewards good and punishes evil (6).

The Psalter begins like the Sermon on the Mount, by proclaiming happiness to the just. Thrice happy (Hebr. *Oh the happiness*) of the just man. The Psalmist describes the just man both negatively and positively. In verse 1 he is described as one who does not adopt the evil maxims and counsels of the ungodly, much less should he associate with the vicious life of sinners, and even delight in the company of those who scoff at religion and deride the just.

Instead of "*chair of pestilence*" the Hebrew text has "*council of scoffers*," i.e., he is not one of those who scoff at religion and holy things. "*Walking*," "*standing*," and "*sitting*" indicate gradations on the downward path of sin, viz., yielding to temptation, obstinacy in sin, and confirmation in wickedness.

Verse 2 describes the just man positively. He willingly and studiously observes the law of God, the

only rule of all true morality. He loves the law in a practical manner by observing it; he meditates upon it continuously that he may the better observe it. In all his actions he has the law of God before his eyes.

The just man is finally compared to a tree, growing beside abundant waters and bearing fruit in due season, i.e., fully developed and perfect fruit.¹ Its leaves shall not wither and fall, because the refreshing moisture keeps it ever vigorous and strong. The running water is a figure of God's grace, producing good works and springing up into life everlasting.²

Whatever the just man undertakes will prosper because the grace of God is with him. We would naturally expect the comparison with a tree to be carried out in regard to sinners, after the manner of St. Jude, who calls them "*trees of autumn, unfruitful, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.*"³

More in accord with the spirit of poetry, the Psalmist introduces new imagery by comparing the wicked to dust—chaff blown about by every gust of wind. As dust is blown from the face of the earth, or chaff from the threshing floor, so shall sinners be dispersed and expelled from the society of the faithful.

It is evident from verse 6 that divine judgment is here referred to, but not the final judgment only. It refers to any judgment of God. Whenever the decrees of God's justice are executed, whether in this life or in the next, the sinner shall be condemned and shall find no place among the just. Verse 6 is a summary of the whole psalm, showing the primary cause of the opposite fortunes of the just and unjust. God,

¹ Jer. xvii. 8.

² John iv. 14.

³ Jude 12,

being justice itself, must reward the one and punish the other. He favors and protects (knows favorably) the way of the just, but the path of the sinner leads to destruction because God's justice must punish all iniquity.

This psalm presents only general ideas true of all time—past, present, and future. They should, therefore, be expressed in the present tense.¹

¹ Cf. introduction, p. 29.

PSALMUS II

- 1 Quare fremuerunt gentes,
et populi meditati sunt in-
ania?
- 2 Astiterunt reges terræ,
et principes convenerunt in
unum
adversus Dominum, et ad-
versus Christum ejus.
- 3 Dirumpamus vincula eorum,
et projiciamus a nobis jugum
ipsorum.
- 4 Qui habitat in cœlis irride-
bit eos;
et Dominus subsannabit eos.
- 5 Tunc loquetur ad eos in ira
sua,
et in furore suo conturbabit
eos.
- 6 Ego autem constitutus sum
rex ab eo
super Sion, montem sanc-
tum ejus,
prædicans præceptum ejus.
- 7 Dominus dixit ad me:
Filius meus es tu;
ego hodie genui te.
- 8 Postula a me, et dabo tibi
gentes hereditatem tuam,

PSALM II

- 1 Why have the Gentiles
raged,
and the people devised vain
things?
- 2 The kings of the earth stood
up,
and the princes met together
against the Lord, and
against his Christ.
- 3 Let us break their bonds
asunder:
and let us cast away their
yoke from us.
- 4 He that dwelleth in heaven
shall laugh at them:
and the Lord shall deride
them.
- 5 Then shall he speak to them
in his anger,
and trouble them in his rage.
- 6 But I am appointed king
by him
over Sion his holy mountain,
preaching his command-
ment.
- 7 The Lord hath said to me:
Thou art my son,
this day have I begotten
thee.
- 8 Ask of me, and I will give
thee the Gentiles for thy
inheritance,

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| et possessionem tuam terminos terræ. | and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. |
| 9 Reges eos in virga ferrea, | 9 Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, |
| et tamquam vas figuli confringes eos. | and shalt break them in pieces like a potter's vessel. |
| 10 Et nunc, reges, intelligite; | 10 And now, O ye kings, understand: |
| erudimini, qui judicatis terram. | receive instruction, you that judge the earth. |
| 11 Servite Domino in timore, | 11 Serve ye the Lord with fear: |
| et exultate ei cum tremore. | and rejoice unto him with trembling. |
| 12 Apprehendite disciplinam, | 12 Embrace discipline, |
| nequando irascatur Dominus, | lest at any time the Lord be angry, |
| et pereatis de via justa. | and you perish from the just way. |
| 13 Cum exarserit in brevi ira ejus, | 13 When his wrath shall be kindled in a short time, |
| Beati omnes qui confidunt in eo. | blessed are all they that trust in him. |

PSALM II

THIS psalm is Messianic. It refers to Christ and to His mystic body, the Church. It prophesies opposition and persecution; it foretells the ignominious defeat of those who oppose the reign of the Messias. The Messianic character and the Davidic authorship of this psalm are clearly shown in Sacred Scripture. Cf. *Acts* iv. 25; xiii. 33; *Heb.* i. 5; *Apoc.* ii. 27; xix. 15.

Some interpreters maintain that this psalm in its literal sense refers to David, or some other earthly king, and to Christ only indirectly or typically. Others believe that it was based on some historical event, but the Psalmist, carried away by the spirit of prophecy, idealizes the situation into the world-wide

dominion of the Messias. Most Catholic authors hold that it is directly and literally Messianic, because the world-wide dominion mentioned in verses 8-9 is applicable to Christ alone. Cf. texts mentioned above.

Synopsis.—Both Jews and Gentiles are aroused by their leaders—kings and princes—to battle against Christ and His Church (1-3); God renders their attempts harmless, laughs them to scorn, and metes out condign punishment (4, 5). Verses 6-9 reveal the great dignity of the Messias against whom kings and princes rise up in vain. He is a king set up and anointed by God Himself (6); in fact, He is the true and natural Son of God (7), the Lord of lords (8), and the powerful avenger of all evil (9). Therefore all should serve God with fear and trembling, and do homage to His divine Son (10-12a). The adversaries of God and of His Anointed shall quickly perish (12b, 13a), but their faithful subjects obtain happiness (13b).

Verse 1.—As in a vision the Royal Psalmist beholds the surging crowds in the distance; the tumult and confusion seem to him like the roaring of an angry sea, and he breaks forth abruptly with surprise and indignation: How have the Gentiles and the people dared to rise up against a divinely appointed king! How have they arisen in tumult like a roaring sea (*"fremuerunt"*) and plotted (*"meditati sunt"*) what they can not accomplish (*"inania"*)?

"Gentiles" (Hebr. *goyim*) refers to peoples or nations other than the Hebrews. Cf. *Luke xviii. 31-32*. "*All things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man. For He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be*

mocked and scourged and spit upon." The "*people*" (Hebr. *leumim*) may mean either Jews or Gentiles. Cf. Acts iv. 27. "*There assembled together in this city against Thy holy child Jesus whom Thou hast anointed, Herod, and Pontius Pilate with the gentiles and the people of Israel.*"

Verse 2.—The Psalmist now recognizes kings and princes leading the people in their rebellion. The kings have risen up, and the princes have plotted together, against God and against the Messiah. In the life of Christ the kings and princes were Herod, Pilate, the chief priests, and the rulers of the Sanhedrin. Since then it has ever been kings and princes—ambitious rulers—that opposed and persecuted the Church. "*Christ*" (Greek, *Christos*; Hebr. *Maschiah*, whence *Messias*) means "the Anointed One." Kings, priests, and prophets were anointed. The reference here is to the kingly anointing. Cf. verse 6 below.

Verse 3.—The shouts and threats of the rabble are distinctly heard: "Come let us break the shackles; let us cast off their yoke. We will serve no longer!" Cf. John xix. 15. "*Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him . . . We have no king but Cæsar.*"

Verses 4, 5.—The scene changes. From the surging crowds on earth our thoughts are directed to heaven, where God sits peacefully enthroned and laughs to scorn the vain attempts of these rebellious subjects. Then in His anger He speaks to them, and in His rage He will terrify them. The passion of anger and rage is attributed to God figuratively. He is said to punish in anger when He punishes severely, especially if the punishment is not remedial but merely punitive.

God derided the perverse Jews when Christ arose from the dead, and when the Gospel was preached and the Church established in the face of bitter opposition and cruel persecution. He spoke to them in His anger when the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem, and when persecutors were stricken down with foul disease and ignominious death.

Verses 6, 7.—Christ now addresses the rebels: You rise up against Me, but in vain, for I have been appointed king by the Lord Himself to rule from Sion, His holy mountain. I proclaim to you His decree, setting Me upon the throne of David to rule with might over all peoples and all nations. He said to Me: Thou art My son. This day I solemnly constitute Thee king upon the throne of David, and proclaim Thee My son as I promised to David. Cf. *2 Kings vii*. “*I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.*”

The universal dominion promised in verse 8 and indicated in verse 1 clearly shows who this king is. He is the Messiah in whom is realized the promise of everlasting dominion and eternal sonship. He is not the son by adoption only, but the true and natural Son of God. The words “*this day*” therefore refer to the Incarnation, for then was the Son of God established on the throne of David forever. Other interpretations are given to “*this day have I begotten thee.*” Many Fathers and interpreters explain them as referring to the eternal generation of the Son, for, as St. Augustine says, “in eternity there is neither past nor future; only an eternal present.” *Acts xiii. 33* applies them to the Resurrection.

Verses 8, 9.—Christ, being the true Son of God, has a right to the paternal dominions which the Father is ready to give Him. He has but to ask and all things will be subjected to Him. “*He shall rule from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth*” (Ps. lxxi. 8). These words foretell the calling of the Gentiles and the universality of the Church. The dominion of Christ shall be supreme and irresistible. His reign shall be salutary for the just, but terrible and coercive in regard to the wicked. In the words of blessed Simeon, “*He is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many*” (Luke ii. 34). Only punitive or coercive power is mentioned here, because there is question only of the wicked who oppose the reign of Christ. The Hebrew has: “*Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron.*”

Verses 10–13.—As a practical conclusion the Psalmist exhorts kings, princes, and all earthly rulers to be loyal subjects of the divinely appointed King of kings, lest they be shattered as the fragile vessel of clay. After the general exhortation of verse 10 the Psalmist gives special admonition in regard to the service of God (11), and the homage due His divine Son (12): Serve God and rejoice in His worship, but with reverential awe, ever mindful of His infinite majesty. Receive this admonition and abide by it; lest the Lord be angry and you perish from the way of justice. When His wrath shall be kindled, as it presently will, blessed are they who trust in Him. This is an emphatic way of expressing the idea we would naturally expect to find here, i.e., woe to them that serve Him not! In the Hebrew text of verse 12 the words *Lord* and *just* are wanting, and instead of “*embrace discipline*” we find a phrase that is gener-

ally translated, "*Kiss the Son,*" i.e., reverence or adore the Son. The first part of verse 13 is joined to verse 12. Hence verses 12, 13, according to the Hebrew, read: "*Adore the Son lest He be angry and you perish on account of your way (your evil actions), when His wrath shall be kindled, as it presently will be.*" The latter part of verse 13, then, stands alone as a chorus: "*Blessed are all they that trust in Him.*"

PSALMUS III

- 1 Psalmus David, cum fugeret
a facie Absalom, filii sui.
- 2 Domine, quid multiplicati
sunt qui tribulant me?
Multi insurgunt adversum
me.
- 3 Multi dicunt animæ meæ:
Non est salus ipsi in Deo
ejus. Selah.
- 4 Tu autem, Domine, suscep-
tor meus es,
gloria mea, et exaltans caput
meum.
- 5 Voce mea ad Dominum cla-
mavi;
et exaudivit me de monte
sancto suo. Selah.
- 6 Ego dormivi, et soporatus
sum;
et exurrexi, quia Dominus
suscepit me.
- 7 Non timebo millia populi
circumdantis me;
exurge, Domine; saluum
me fac, Deus meus.
- 8 Quoniam tu percussisti omnes
adversantes mihi sine cau-
sa;
dentes peccatorum contri-
visti.
- 9 Domini est salus;
et super populum tuum bene-
dictio tua. Selah.

PSALM III

- 1 The Psalm of David when
he fled from the face of
his son Absalom.
- 2 Why, O Lord, are they mul-
tiplied that afflict me?
Many are they who rise up
against me.
- 3 Many say to my soul:
There is no salvation for him
in his God. Selah.
- 4 But thou, O Lord, art my
protector,
my glory, and the lifter up
of my head.
- 5 I have cried to the Lord
with my voice:
and he hath heard me from
his holy hill. Selah.
- 6 I have slept and have taken
my rest:
and I have risen up, because
the Lord hath protected
me.
- 7 I will not fear thousands of
the people, surrounding me:
arise, O Lord; save me, O
my God.
- 8 For thou hast struck all
them who are my adver-
saries without cause:
thou hast broken the teeth
of sinners.
- 9 Salvation is of the Lord:
and thy blessing is upon thy
people. Selah.

PSALM III

THE title of this psalm assigns it to the time of Absalom's rebellion. Cf. *2 Kings* xv. 14. In a typical sense it refers to Christ and His Church.

Synopsis.—The Psalmist is surrounded by enemies (2) who are insolent toward him (3), but God is his defender (4) who hears all his supplications (5). Therefore he rests secure, even at night (6) and in the midst of dangers (7a). He implores divine aid (7b-9).

Verses 2, 3.—With sorrow David learns of his son's rebellion; hearing of the great number of followers ¹ he cries out: O Lord, how my enemies are multiplied! Many are they that rise up against me! They say: His days are numbered. In vain does he trust in God, for God has deserted him.²

Verses 4, 5.—They say Thou hast deserted me, O Lord, but Thou art with me still; Thou art my protector; Thou wilt restore me my prestige and my glory. Thou wilt lift up my head with joy, for the victory will be mine. David is surrounded by dangers, but he cries out to God with firm confidence. I will call upon God and He will hear me: He will answer me from Sion, His holy mount.

We may retain the past tense of the Vulgate, thus: In the past God was ever wont to answer all my prayers. I know that He will hear me now.

Verses 6, 7a.—Even at night when dangers are greatest, I have nothing to fear. I sleep as one who has no anxiety, and in the morning I arise in security because the Lord was protecting me all the while. I

¹ *2 Kings* xv. 13.

² *2 Kings* xvi. 8.

fear not the enemy that surrounds me on every side.

Instead of "*I have slept and have taken my rest,*" the Hebrew reads, "*I laid me down and slept,*" i.e., I was not overcome with fatigue nor oppressed by sleep, but lay down in peace and security because I trusted in the protection of God.

The Church applies this verse to the death and resurrection of Christ.

Verses 7b, 8.—David now implores divine assistance. Arise, O Lord, come to my aid. Be with me now as in the past. Many a time didst Thou smite them that opposed me unjustly; yea, Thou didst deprive them of all power to harm. David's enemies are compared to wild beasts, rendered harmless by breaking out their teeth.

The Hebrew text has a better parallelism: "*Thou hast smitten all mine enemies on the jaw; Thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked,*" i.e., Thou hast meted out such severe and ignominious punishment that my enemies have been rendered powerless for further harm.

To receive a blow in the face was considered an ignominy or reproach. Cf. *Job* xvi. 11.

Verse 9.—Deliverance is the Lord's. It is He who gives the victory. This is the practical conclusion of the whole psalm, and a tacit reply to the words of the rebels (3): "*There is no salvation for him in his God.*"

The last phrase is a prayer rather than a simple statement. In liturgical usage it was probably chanted by all the people as a chorus: "Thy blessing be upon Thy people!"

PSALMUS IV

- 1 In finem, in carminibus,
Psalmus David.
- 2 Cum invocarem exaudivit
me Deus justitiæ meæ,

in tribulatione dilatasti mihi.

Miserere mei, et exaudi ora-
tionem meam.
- 3 Filii hominum, usquequo
gravi corde?
Et quid diligitis vanitatem,
et quæritis mendacium?
Selah.
- 4 Et scitote quoniam mirifica-
vit Dominus sanctum
suum;
Dominus exaudiet me cum
clamavero ad eum.
- 5 Irascimini, et nolite peccare;
quæ dicitis in cordibus ves-
tris, in cubilibus vestris
compungimini. Selah.
- 6 Sacrificate sacrificium justi-
tiæ,
et sperate in Domino.
Multi dicunt: Quis ostendit
nobis bona?
- 7 Signatum est super nos lumen
vultus tui, Domine.

Dedisti lætitiā in corde
meo.
- 8 A fructu frumenti, vini et
olei sui, multiplicati sunt.

PSALM IV

- 1 Unto the end, in verses. A
psalm for David.
- 2 When I called upon him,
the God of my justice
heard me:
when I was in distress, thou
hast enlarged me.
Have mercy on me: and
hear my prayer.
- 3 O ye sons of men, how long
will you be dull of heart?
why do you love vanity, and
seek after lying? Selah.
- 4 Know ye also that the Lord
hath made his holy one
wonderful:
the Lord will hear me when
I shall cry unto him.
- 5 Be ye angry, and sin not:
the things you say in your
hearts, be sorry for them
upon your beds. Selah.
- 6 Offer up the sacrifice of
justice,
and trust in the Lord:
Many say, Who sheweth us
good things?
- 7 The light of thy counte-
nance, O Lord, is signed
upon us:
thou hast given gladness in
my heart.
- 8 By the fruit of their corn,
their wine, and oil, they
are multiplied.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>9 In pace in idipsum dormiam,
et requiescam;</p> <p>10 Quoniam tu, Domine, singulariter in spe constituisti me.</p> | <p>9 In peace in the selfsame I
will sleep, and I will rest:</p> <p>10 For thou, O Lord, singularly
hast settled me in hope.</p> |
|--|--|

PSALM IV

BECAUSE of their similarities many believe that Psalms iii and iv were written for one and the same occasion; the one a morning prayer, the other an evening prayer.

Synopsis.—After a prayer (2) David admonishes his enemies to oppose him no longer (3–5). He urges his followers to trust in God (6a). Many are discouraged (6b), but David reassures them (7–10).

Verse 1.—The words “*Unto the end*” occur in the title of fifty-five psalms. The meaning is very obscure. The Hebrew *lamenacceah* is now generally rendered “*to the director*,” i.e., to the leader of the singing, to the choirmaster. The word is used in 1 *Paral.* xv. 22 in the sense of leading or directing the chant. “*To the director*” is probably a dative of possession, indicating that there was a director’s collection of psalms to be used in liturgical services.¹ The Hebrew *neginoth* (Vulgate, “*verses*”) is found in the title of five psalms. The root of the word probably means, “to play on stringed instruments.”² As used in the titles it probably means that the psalm was to be sung to the accompaniment of stringed instruments.³

Verse 2.—Before reproving his adversaries the Royal Psalmist addresses himself to prayer: When-

¹ Cf. Introduction, p. 18.

² Cf. 1 Kings. xvi. 16–18.

³ Cf. “Cath. Encyc.” art. “Psalms.”

soever I called upon God, the protector of my just cause, He heard my cries and supplications. Yea, O Lord, Thou hast ever delivered (set at large; enlarged) me from all my troubles. Therefore do I come to Thee with confidence. Have mercy on me, and deign to hear me once again.

Verse 3.—David then addresses the men of prominence (“*sons of man*,” cf. *Ps.* xlvii. 3) who are in rebellion against him: How long will you be perverse of heart (dull, heavy of heart? cf. “*Ingravatum est cor Pharaonis*” [*Ex.* vii. 14]). How long will you persevere in your wicked attempts to overturn my throne? Why (Hebrew “*How long*”) will you persist in your vain attempts (*vanity*) and evil counsels (*lying*) against me? In Hebrew the first part of the verse reads: “*Sons of man, how long will you turn my glory into shame?*”

Verse 4.—All your attempts will be vain, for know ye, the Lord hath shown wonderful favors and mercies to me, His devoted servant (*His holy one*). I have but to call upon Him and He will deliver me out of your hands.

Verse 5.—The Hebrew, “*ragats*,” here rendered “*be angry*,” literally means to tremble with emotion—fear, anger, sorrow, or even joy. St. Paul quotes the passage as referring to anger.¹ If you be angry, be careful lest you also sin: Do not give way to anger so far as to commit sin thereby. If we use it here in this sense, the meaning would be: Chafe at my rule if you will, but sin not by rebelling against me.

Taking the word in the sense of sorrow, or contrition, gives a much better parallelism: Be sorry for

¹ Ephes. iv. 26.

the sins you have already committed against me, and resolve to sin no more. In the lonely hours of the night, free from the distractions of the day, meditate upon the evils you have planned (said in your heart) against me, and be sorry for them. The Hebrew reads: "*Be angry and sin not; Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be quiet.*" To be quiet, or cease, means to cease speaking, or to cease acting. In this case it means the latter.

Verse 6.—David now addresses his own followers. Offer up the sacrifice prescribed by the Law ("*sacrifice of justice.*" Cf. *Deut.* xxxiii. 19) and trust in God. Many of them are disheartened and despair of God's help. They say: Who will deliver us from the dangers that threaten us? (Who will show us good things?) Some interpreters consider the first part of this verse a continuation of David's admonition to his adversaries. He urges them to turn from their evil ways, to offer up sacrifices for past sins, and to trust in God.

Verses 7, 8.—David reassures his disheartened followers. It is God who will deliver us from all dangers. Thou, O Lord, hast already favored us: the light of Thy benign countenance hath already shone upon us (literally, been displayed over us like a banner). Thou hast given me gladness of heart; Thou hast made me rejoice more than husbandmen in the time of abundant harvests.

To show the face, means to favor or bless. Cf. the words of benediction, *Num.* vi. 24: "*The Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord show His face to thee and have mercy on thee. The Lord turn His countenance to thee and give thee peace.*" In the Hebrew text verse 7a is an invocation: "*Lift up over us, O*

Lord, the light of Thy countenance." The reading of the Vulgate agrees better with the next phrase: "*Thou hast given gladness,*" etc. The Psalmist is reciting past favors to encourage his followers.

In the Vulgate verse 8 is unintelligible. In the Hebrew it is joined to the preceding phrase thus: Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time when their corn and wine abound. Cf. *Is.* ix. 3.

The reading of the Septuagint and Vulgate is probably due to a copyist's mistaking *kairos* (season) for *karpos* (fruit). The Old Itala and Syriac versions and, as Origen informs us, many Mss. of the Septuagint agree with the Hebrew.

Verses 9, 10.—Such is David's confidence that he can peacefully compose himself for sleep in the midst of dangers, feeling secure in God's protection. "In calm, peaceful trust he goes to sleep upon his bed with this evening prayer upon his lips."¹

"*In idipsum*" is a Hebraism for "*together,*" "*at the same time*": I will lay me down, and at the same time, I will take my rest, because God protects me. He has made me to dwell apart, secure from all dangers (i.e., in hope).

Some construe the adverb "*singularly*" to mean: It is Thou, alone, O Lord, who makest me to dwell in security.

¹ Briggs.

PSALMUS V

- 1 In finem, pro eam quæ
hereditatem consequitur,
Psalmus David.
- 2 Verba mea auribus percipe,
Domine;
intellige clamorem meum.
- 3 Intende voci orationis meæ,
rex meus et Deus meus.
- 4 Quoniam ad te orabo,
Domine, mane exaudies vo-
cem meam.
- 5 Mane astabo tibi, et videbo

quoniam non Deus volens
iniquitatem tu es.
- 6 Neque habitabit juxta te
malignus,
neque permanebunt injusti
ante oculos tuos.
- 7 Odisti omnes qui operantur
iniquitatem;
perdes omnes qui loquuntur
mendacium.
Virum sanguinum et dolo-
sum abominabitur Dom-
inus.
- 8 Ego autem, in multitudine
misericordiæ tuæ, introibo
in domum tuam;
adorabo ad templum sanc-
tum tuum in timore tuo.
- 9 Domine deduc me in jus-
titia tua;
propter inimicos meos di-
rige in conspectu tuo
viam meam.

PSALM V

- 1 Unto the end, for her that
obtaineth the inheritance,
A psalm for David.
- 2 Give ear, O Lord, to my
words,
understand my cry.
- 3 Hearken to the voice of my
prayer, O my king and
my God.
- 4 For to thee will I pray:
O Lord, in the morning thou
shalt hear my voice.
- 5 In the morning I will stand
before thee, and will see:
because thou art not a God
that willest iniquity.
- 6 Neither shall the wicked
dwell near thee;
nor shall the unjust abide
before thy eyes.
- 7 Thou hatest all the workers
of iniquity:
thou wilt destroy all that
speak a lie.
The bloody and the de-
ceitful man the Lord will
abhor.
- 8 But as for me in the multi-
tude of thy mercy, I will
come into thy house;
I will worship toward thy
holy temple, in thy fear.
- 9 Conduct me, O Lord, in thy
justice:
because of my enemies, di-
rect my way in thy sight.

- 10 Quoniam non est in ore
eorum veritas;
cor eorum vanum est.
- 11 Sepulchrum patens est gut-
tur eorum;
linguis suis dolose agebant,
judica illos, Deus.
Decidant a cogitationibus
suis;
secundum multitudinem im-
pietatum eorum expelle
eos,
quoniam irritaverunt te,
Domine.
- 12 Et lætentur omnes qui spe-
rant in te;
in æternum exultabunt, et
habitabis in eis.
- Et gloriabuntur in te omnes
qui diligunt nomen tuum,
- 13 Quoniam tu benedices justo,
Domine, ut scuto bonæ
voluntatis tuæ coronasti
nos.
- 10 For there is no truth in their
mouth:
their heart is vain.
- 11 Their throat is an open
sepulchre:
they dealt deceitfully with
their tongues:
judge them, O God.
Let them fall from their
devices:
according to the multitude
of their wickednesses cast
them out:
for they have provoked
thee, O Lord.
- 12 But let all them be glad
that hope in thee:
they shall rejoice for ever,
and thou shalt dwell in
them.
- And all they that love thy
name shall glory in thee.
- 13 For thou wilt bless the just.
O Lord, thou hast crowned
us, as with a shield of
thy good will.

PSALM V

THIS psalm is a morning prayer of David when surrounded by bloodthirsty enemies plotting his ruin. Perhaps it is to be assigned to the time of Saul's persecution or Absalom's rebellion.

Synopsis.—While preparing for the morning sacrifice David earnestly beseeches God to hear him (2-5a). He is confident because God hates all evil-doers (5b-7). He is graciously permitted to enter the house of God and lay before Him his needs (8). He therefore prays for protection against his enemies (9), who are perverse and deceitful (10-11a). He prays for their undoing (11b). When their enemies

are confounded the just will rejoice in God's protection (12-13).

Verse 1.—Many Fathers interpret this title as referring to the Church which obtains the inheritance of eternal life for her children. The Hebrew *nehiloth* is derived from a word meaning *to inherit*. The Targum renders it "*for the flutes*." Most authors adopt this interpretation which they arrive at by a slight change in the word. This enables them to derive it from a root meaning *to perforate*. Others consider it the opening words of some well-known song or hymn to the melody of which the psalm was to be sung.¹

Verses 2, 3.—The earnest petitions in these opening verses indicate that the Psalmist was surrounded by grave dangers that troubled him sorely. He addresses the Lord as His King and his God, titles intended to move Him to a favorable hearing. My King who protects me, and defends my rights! My God, my only help, the source of all my good—my God and my all!

Verses 4, 5a.—David is confident that God will hear him because he fulfils the requisite condition—he turns to God in supplication. Unto Thee do I pray in the morning, at the hour of sacrifice, when Thou art wont to hear the voice of Thy servants. I come before Thee with my petitions; I look to Thee for assistance. Cf. *Mich.* vii. 7: "*I will look toward the Lord, I will wait for God my Saviour*." The Hebrew, "*harak*," here rendered "*to stand*," literally means "*to arrange*," "*to set in order*," and is used in connection with the preparations for sacrifice. Thus the meaning: In the morning I prepare

¹ Cf. Cornely, "Cath. Encyc.," Thirde.

a sacrifice to Thee and with confidence await Thy aid. Or, it may be taken figuratively: As the priests, in the morning, prepare sacrifices upon the altar, so I bring my prayers before Thee as a spiritual sacrifice, and confidently look to Thee for answer.

Verses 5b-7.—Because God is infinitely holy He hates all iniquity; therefore the wicked . . . the unjust, the bloodthirsty, and the deceitful . . . shall be driven from His presence (literally, can not dwell with Him as a guest), and destroyed.

Verses 8, 9.—But Thou graciously allowest me to come into Thy house and be Thy guest. Through Thy loving-kindness I will enter Thy house (the Tabernacle), and I will bow down toward Thy holy temple (the Holy of Holies), and reverently worship Thee. I will place before Thee all my needs in supplication. In the Tabernacle, prostrate before the Holy of Holies, David implores divine guidance and protection: Lead me, O Lord, in the path of justice, and direct my life (my way) that it may be just in Thy sight lest my enemies have occasion to rejoice at my downfall.

Others interpret it thus: Guide me, O Lord, as becomes Thy justice, that I may pass unharmed among my enemies.

Verses 10, 11.—David's urgent need of divine help is shown by the character of his enemies. Their heart is vain (Hebr.: "*their innermost part is but wickedness*"); it is given up to evil designs and sinful actions; there is no sincerity in their words, because, as our Lord reminds us, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.¹

As an open sepulcher emits a disgusting and

¹ Matt, xii, 34,

unbearable stench, so from the evil hearts of David's enemies there wells up the worst of sins . . . detractions, calumnies, evil plots, and incentives to sin. David prays God to punish his enemies according to their deserts: Judge them, O God. Let them fall short in the accomplishment of their evil designs, i.e., may they not be able to effect their wicked plots. Or, as some interpret it: May their evil devices turn to their own destruction. Cast them out, disperse them, as their wickedness deserves, because they have provoked Thee (Hebr. "*rebelled against Thee*").

In rebelling against David, a divinely appointed king, they also rebelled against God. Cf. *1 Kings* viii. 7: "*They have not rejected thee but me.*"

Verses 12, 13.—Let those who trust in Thee (i.e., David and his followers) be glad because of the manifestation of Thy justice against their enemies. They shall rejoice for ever. Thou shalt deign to dwell in their midst to protect and sustain them. All the faithful (those that love Thy name) shall glory in Thy protection, for Thou art wont to bless the just man. Thou hast surrounded (literally, "*crowned*") us with Thy benevolence and goodness, as with a protecting shield.

The whole passage may be taken as a supplication: Let those that hope in Thee be glad: let them rejoice for ever, and do Thou deign to dwell in their midst. Let those that love Thy name glory in Thee, for Thou wilt bless the just. Thou hast crowned us, O Lord, as with a protecting shield of Thy favor.

PSALMUS VI

- 1 In finem, in carminibus,
Psalmus David, pro octava.
- 2 Domine, ne in furore tuo
arguas me,
neque in ira tua corripas
me.
- 3 Miserere mei, Domine, quoniam
infirmus sum;
sana me, Domine, quoniam
conturbata sunt ossa mea.
- 4 Et anima mea turbata est
valde;
sed tu, Domine, usquequo?
- 5 Convertere, Domine, et eripe
animam meam;
salvum me fac propter
misericordiam tuam.
- 6 Quoniam non est in morte
qui memor sit tui;
in inferno autem quis confitebitur tibi?
- 7 Laboravi in gemitu meo;
lavabo per singulas noctes
lectum meum;
lacrymis meis stratum
meum rigabo.
- 8 Turbatus est a furore oculus meus;
inveteravi inter omnes inimicos meos.
- 9 Discedite a me omnes qui
operamini iniquitatem,
quoniam exaudivit Dominus
vocem fletus mei.

PSALM VI

- 1 Unto the end, in verses, a
psalm for David, for the
octave.
- 2 O Lord, rebuke me not in
thy indignation,
nor chastise me in thy wrath.
- 3 Have mercy on me, O Lord,
for I am weak:
heal me, O Lord, for my
bones are troubled.
- 4 And my soul is troubled
exceedingly:
but thou, O Lord, how long?
- 5 Turn to me, O Lord, and
deliver my soul:
O save me for thy mercy's
sake.
- 6 For there is no one in death,
that is mindful of thee.
and who shall confess to
thee in hell?
- 7 I have labored in my groanings,
every night I will wash my
bed:
I will wash my couch with
my tears.
- 8 My eye is troubled through
indignation:
I have grown old amongst
all my enemies.
- 9 Depart from me, all ye
workers of iniquity:
for the Lord hath heard the
voice of my weeping.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>10 Exaudivit Dominus deprecationem meam;
Dominus orationem meam suscepit.</p> <p>11 Erubescant, et conturbentur vehementer omnes inimici mei;
convertantur, et erubescant valde velociter.</p> | <p>10 The Lord hath heard my supplication:
the Lord hath received my prayer.</p> <p>11 Let all my enemies be ashamed, and be very much troubled:
Let them be turned back, and be ashamed very speedily.</p> |
|---|---|

PSALM VI

THIS is the first of the seven Penitential Psalms.

Synopsis.—The Psalmist implores God to be merciful to him, a sinner (2), who is already suffering the punishment of bodily affliction (3, 4). He asks deliverance from death (5), that he may still serve and glorify God upon earth (6). He describes the sorrows occasioned by the thought of his sins (7), and by the opposition of his enemies (8). Taking new courage, he cries out with joy that God has heard his prayers (9, 10). He then implores that all his enemies be put to shame (11).

Verse 1.—“*For the octave*” (Hebr. *al hashminith*, “upon the eighth”). This is found in the title of two Psalms (vi, xi). It is generally taken to indicate the tone of voice in which the psalm was to be sung. In the title of *Ps. xlv* we find what is generally conceded to be a correlative term, “*al alamot*,” “to the maidens.” This latter phrase seems to mean that the psalm was to be sung in a high, or soprano voice (female voice). The other term probably means a lower or bass voice. The two terms are found in 1 *Paral. xv. 20–21*. “*And Zacharias . . . and Banaias sung al alamot* (Vulgate, “*mysteries*”) upon psalteries. *And Mathathias . . . and Ozaius*

sung a song of victory al hashminith (Vulgate, "for the octave") *upon harps.*" Some believe that musical instruments are meant, but the distinct mention of the instruments used excludes such interpretation.

Verses 2-4.—This is the petition of one who is truly penitent and acknowledges the justice of his punishment, but beseeches God to temper it with paternal kindness. He begs that the punishment be not unto destruction, but unto salvation.¹

Punish me not according to Thy justice, but rather show mercy and heal me, for I am sick: my very bones are racked with pain, and I am sore distressed. But Thou, O Lord, how long? This simple expression is very significant. It is the cry of one greatly troubled in soul, and weakened by suffering. He is unable to say more. The meaning is: How long, O Lord, wilt Thou withhold Thy help? How long wilt Thou be angry and afflict me?

Verses 5, 6.—Turn to me, O Lord, with Thy saving help, and in Thy mercy deliver me from the danger of death.

God is said to turn toward those whom He helps or favors, and away from those whom He punishes. David gives a reason for deliverance from death, viz., that he may still be able to praise and glorify God among the living. If he die; if he be consigned to the realm of the dead, he will no longer be able to promote the worship of God as do the living. Cf. *Is.* xxxviii. 18: "*For hell shall not confess to Thee, neither shall death praise Thee . . . ; The living, the living shall give praise to Thee, as I do this day.*"

"*Sheol*" (*hades* of the Greeks) means the place

¹ Cf. *Ps.* ii. 5.

or state of the soul after death, and is sometimes taken to mean the grave. "It is represented as a place of sorrow, a land of darkness,"¹ where souls "indeed live, but it is only a quasi-life because they are secluded from the light of this world, and what is the most lamentable, from the light of God's presence."² Hence in *Ps.* xv. 10 David expresses joy at the thought that God will not permit his soul to remain forever in *sheol*, but will finally bring it into the glory of the Beatific Vision. It is evident that there is no denial of immortality, as some contend.

Verses 7, 8.—David gives us a vivid description of his sorrows. I am worn out with grief: every night my couch is drenched with tears. As is usual with the sick, David grows worse at night. Increased pains make him restless: sleep eludes his weary eyes, and the thought of his sins comes before him. Alone upon a bed of pain, his sorrows seem to multiply and he weeps . . . weeps until his couch is flooded with tears.

My eye is troubled, i.e., sunken and dimmed, from great sorrow and long continued weeping. Surrounded by enemies plotting my ruin, I have been worn out with care and anxiety . . . I have become like an old man, infirm, depressed in spirit, and fearful for my life.

In the Hebrew: "*My eye has grown old amongst all my enemies*," i.e., my eye has become dim and weak like the eye of an old man.

Verses 9, 10.—Taking new courage from his confidence in God, David suddenly cries out with joy as if triumphing over his enemies: Depart from me, you evil ones; you can cause me no harm for God

¹ Knabenbauer.

² Delitzsch.

has heard my prayer. My tears have moved Him to mercy.

Verse 11.—Let all my enemies be put to shame because of failure to effect their evil counsels; or, because of my recovery and my deliverance when they thought my case hopeless. Let them be put to shame at once; let my recovery and deliverance be speedy. In the Hebrew this passage is in the future tense, expressing David's firm confidence in the final outcome. They shall be put to shame and that quickly.

PSALMUS VII

- 1 Psalmus David, quem cantavit Domino pro verbis Chusi filii Jemini.
- 2 Domine Deus meus, in te speravi;
salvum me fac ex omnibus persequentibus me, et libera me,
- 3 Nequando rapiat ut leo animam meam,
dum non est qui redimat, neque qui salvum faciat.
- 4 Domine Deus meus, si feci istud,
si est iniquitas in manibus meis,
- 5 Si reddidi retribuentibus mihi mala,
decidam merito ab inimicis meis inanis.
- 6 Persequatur inimicus animam meam,
et comprehendat; et conculcet in terra vitam meam,
et gloriam meam in pulverem deducat. *Selah.*
- 7 Exurge, Domine, in ira tua;
et exaltare in finibus inimicorum meorum;
Et exurge, Domine Deus meus, in præcepto quod mandasti;
- 8 et synagoga populorum circumdabit te.

PSALM VII

- 1 The psalm of David which he sung to the Lord for the words of Chusi the son of Jemini.
- 2 O Lord my God, in thee have I put my trust:
save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me.
- 3 Lest at any time he sieze upon my soul like a lion, while there is no one to redeem me, nor to save.
- 4 O Lord my God, if I have done this thing,
if there be iniquity in my hands:
- 5 If I have rendered to them that repaid me evils,
let me deservedly fall empty before my enemies.
- 6 Let the enemy pursue my soul,
and take it, and tread down my life on the earth,
and bring down my glory to the dust. *Selah.*
- 7 Rise up, O Lord, in thy anger:
and be thou exalted in the borders of my enemies.
And arise, O Lord my God, in the precept which thou hast commanded:
- 8 and a congregation of people shall surround thee.

- Et propter hanc in altum
regredere.
- 9 Dominus judicat populos.
- Judica me, Domine, secundum justitiam meam,
et secundum innocentiam meam super me.
- 10 Consumetur nequitia peccatorum;
et diriges justum,
scrutans corda et renes,
Deus.
- 11 Justus adiutorium meum a Domino,
qui salvos facit rectos corde.
- 12 Deus iudex justus, fortis,
et patiens;
numquid irascitur per singulos dies?
- 13 Nisi conversi fueritis, gladium suum vibrabit;
arcum suum tetendit, et paravit illum.
- 14 Et in eo paravit vasa mortis;
sagittas suas ardentibus effecit.
- 15 Ecce parturit injustitiam;
concepit dolorem, et peperit iniquitatem.
- 16 Lacum aperuit, et effodit eum;
et incidit in foveam quam fecit.
- 17 Convertetur dolor ejus in caput ejus,
et in verticem ipsius iniquitas ejus descendet.
- And for their sakes return thou on high.
- 9 The Lord judgeth the people.
Judge me, O Lord, according to my justice,
and according to my innocence in me.
- 10 The wickedness of sinners shall be brought to nought:
and thou shalt direct the just:
the searcher of hearts and reins is God.
- 11 Just is my help from the Lord:
who saveth the upright of heart.
- 12 God is a just judge, strong and patient:
is he angry every day?
- 13 Except you will be converted, he will brandish his sword:
he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.
- 14 And in it he hath prepared the instruments of death,
he hath made ready his arrows for them that burn.
- 15 Behold he hath been in labor with injustice;
he hath conceived sorrow, and brought forth iniquity.
- 16 He hath opened a pit and dug it:
and he is fallen into the hole he made.
- 17 His sorrow shall be turned on his own head:
and his iniquity shall come down upon his crown.

18 Confitebor Domino secundum justitiam ejus, et psallam nomini Domini altissimi.

18 I will give glory to the Lord according to his justice: and will sing to the name of the Lord the most high.

PSALM VII

Synopsis.—Calumniated and hounded by an enemy (1), David trusts in God (2) and prays for safety and deliverance (3). David is innocent of the crimes charged against him (4-6); therefore he prays God to manifest His justice (7-10). He is confident of protection (11) because God is a just judge. He is also patient, and frequently gives time for repentance (12), but if the sinner does not repent he will be severely punished (13, 14). David's calumniator shall fall by means of his own devices (15-17). David praises the justice of God (18).

Verse 1.—The title of this psalm shows that it was occasioned by the calumnies of a certain Cush, a Benjaminite.¹ He is not mentioned elsewhere in Sacred Scripture, and here only as an obscure personage. It simply says "*a Benjaminite.*" Had he been well known he would most probably have been called "*the Benjaminite.*" "Cush must have been one of the many servants of Saul, his kinsman, one of the tale-bearers like Doeg and the Ziphites, who shamefully slandered David before Saul, and aroused him against David."²

Verses 2, 3.—David has ever trusted in the protection of God, and now turns to Him for deliverance from all his enemies, especially from Cush, or the one whom Cush has aroused against him. David

¹ Ben-Jemini, i.e., son of Jemini.

² Delitzsch.

compares this enemy to a lion. Save me, O Lord, lest he seize upon me and kill me, as a lion seizes his prey and tears it to pieces.

The Hebrew text is more graphic: "*Lest he tear my soul like a lion; crushing my bones while there is no one to save.*"

Verses 4-6.—In these verses David protests his innocence with a deprecatory oath. If I be guilty of the crimes laid to me, if I have used violence or committed acts of oppression (accepted bribes) against others, if I have returned evil for evil, then let me fall unprotected as I deserve. Let my enemy pursue and overtake me; let him take my life and turn my glory into shame, and make my very name a reproach among men.

"*My glory*" is taken by some as a Hebraism for the pronoun "me." May the enemy pursue and overtake me, and trample me under his feet and bring me down into the dust, i.e., kill me.

In the Hebrew text verse 5 reads: "*If I have requited him that was at peace with me with evil: Nay, rather have I set free him who was my enemy without cause.*"

Verse 7.—I am innocent of these crimes; arise, therefore, O Lord, and come to my defense. Arise in Thy might and show forth Thy justice against all my enemies. . . . even to the uttermost bounds of them. Thou hast commanded that the innocent be protected and the wicked punished. Arise, therefore, O Lord, in my defense and bring down my wicked adversaries.

The Hebrew reads: "*Arise, O Lord, in Thy wrath, uplift Thyself against the pride of my adversaries: And arise for me, Thou who hast decreed jus-*

tice." The second part may be taken as above, or it may be interpreted to mean: Arise and manifest Thy justice in the judgment which Thou hast already decreed against my enemies.

Verse 8.—The Psalmist has called upon God to give judgment in his cause, by overthrowing and destroying his enemies, and his followers are anxiously awaiting the outcome. The situation is described under the figure of a judgment scene. The people (St. Jerome, the tribes) have assembled, and now crowd around to witness the judgment which Thou wilt decree against my enemies. For their sake do Thou deign to mount the judgment seat (return on high), and execute Thy justice.

Verses 9, 10.—It is the Lord who judgeth; therefore will I commend my cause to Him. Judge me, O Lord, according to my innocence; reward me according to the justice of my actions. Let sinners be punished according to their deeds; let their wickedness be brought to an end. But do Thou, O Lord, protect the just, for Thou art a just judge; Thou knowest even the secret desires of men's hearts, and art not compelled to judge by outward appearances alone. "*Consumetur*" (shall be destroyed) seems to be a copyist's mistake for "*consummetur*" (let it be ended). "*Diriges*" ("shall direct") should then be "*dirigas*," ("mayst thou direct"), making the verse a supplication, as above. The futures of the Vulgate may be taken as the result of the judgment to which the Psalmist appealed in verse 9. By the just judgment of God sinners shall be brought to nought, but the just shall be favored and protected.

Verse 11.—In the Hebrew text the word "*just*" belongs to the preceding verse: Thou art He who

searchest the hearts and reins . . . a just God. My shield is upon God, etc. According to the Vulgate, My just help is from God, i.e., the help that I deserve from God who protects the upright of heart.

Verse 12.—God is a just judge able to execute all His decrees, but He is also patient and frequently delays punishment that the sinner may have time to repent. The Hebrew reads: “*God is a just judge and God shows His indignation every day,*” i.e., the justice of God is continuous and the sinner can never be secure from its effects.

Verses 13, 14.—If the sinner will not repent he shall be severely punished. God stands ready to inflict the penalty. He brandishes His sword; He has bent His bow and fitted it with death-dealing arrows (instruments of death) ready for action against all impenitent sinners. He hath made His arrows fiery darts . . . perhaps an allusion to the thunderbolt as the arrow of God’s wrath. Many interpreters render the Vulgate thus: He hath prepared His arrows for those who burn, (persecute) me. A much better reading is had by supplying the word *materiis*, thus: He hath made His arrows from inflammable material . . . the fire-darts of ancient times.

Verses 15–17.—My calumniator has striven to bring about my ruin. He has been, as it were, in labor with iniquity: he conceived trouble and mischief (sorrow) for me, and behold! he hath brought forth only falsehood that will prove his own ruin. The evil plots of David’s calumniator shall be his own undoing. He is like a hunter who digs a pit to entrap wild beasts and falls into it himself. The trouble he planned for David shall be turned

against himself, and like a poorly built house will tumble down upon his head.

Verse 18.—Since God manifests His justice by punishing my adversaries and delivering me from their machinations, it is fitting that I should praise Him and glorify His name. This verse was probably sung as a chorus by the people.

PSALMUS VIII

- 1 In finem, pro torcularibus,
Psalmus David.
- 2 Domine, Dominus noster,
quam admirabile est no-
men tuum in universa
terra!
Quoniam elevata est mag-
nificencia tua super cœlos.
- 3 Ex ore infantium et lac-
tentium perfecisti laudem
propter inimicos tuos, ut
destruas inimicum et ulto-
rem.
- 4 Quoniam videbo cœlos tuos,
opera digitorum tuorum,
lunam et stellas quæ tu
fundasti:
- 5 Quid est homo, quod memor
es ejus?
aut filius hominis, quoniam
visitas eum?
- 6 Minuisti eum paulo minus
ab angelis;
gloria et honore coronasti
eum;
- 7 Et constituisti eum super
opera manuum tuarum.
- 8 Omnia subjecisti sub pedi-
bus ejus,
oves et boves universas,
insuper et pecora campi,

PSALM VIII

- 1 Unto the end, for the presses:
a psalm for David.
- 2 O Lord our Lord, how ad-
mirable is thy name in
the whole earth!
For thy magnificence is ele-
vated above the heavens.
- 3 Out of the mouth of in-
fants and of sucklings
thou hast perfected praise,
because of thy enemies,
that thou mayest destroy
the enemy and the aven-
ger.
- 4 For I will behold thy heav-
ens, the works of thy
fingers,
the moon and the stars
which thou hast founded.
- 5 What is man that thou art
mindful of him?
or the son of man that
thou visitest him?
- 6 Thou hast made him a little
less than the angels,
thou hast crowned him with
glory and honor:
- 7 and hast set over him
the works of thy hands.
- 8 Thou hast subjected all
things under his feet,
all sheep and oxen:
moreover the beasts also
of the fields,

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>9 Volucres cœli, et pisces
maris
qui perambulant semitas
maris.</p> | <p>9 The birds of the air, and
the fishes of the sea,
that pass through the
paths of the sea.</p> |
| <p>10 Domine, Dominus noster,
quam admirabile est no-
men tuum in universa
terra!</p> | <p>10 O Lord our Lord, how ad-
mirable is thy name in
all the earth!</p> |

PSALM VIII

THIS psalm is a hymn of praise celebrating the majesty and glory of God as revealed in His creatures. It begins and ends with an outburst of admiration. "How admirable, O Lord, is Thy name!"

Synopsis.—The name of God is glorious throughout the whole earth (2a), for the heavens proclaim His wisdom and power (2b); even babes unconsciously sound His praises (3a) and silence the wicked who do not wish to acknowledge Him (3b). When compared with the glorious expanse of heaven (4), man seems as nothing (5); yet God in His goodness has crowned him with glory (6), and placed him over all other creatures (7-9). The psalm closes with a refrain of admiration (10).

Verse 1.—"*For the presses*" is found in the title of three psalms (viii, lxxx, lxxxiii). The present Hebrew text has "*al-haggittith*," "on the *gittith*." Those who follow this reading maintain that it is the name of a musical instrument unknown to us. The Targum renders it: "Upon the harp which David brought from Gath." The Septuagint and St. Jerome read *gittoth* (pl. of *gath*, a wine-press). It probably means that these psalms were to be sung to the melody of a vintage song.

Verse 2.—The Royal Psalmist gazes upon the

starry expanse of heaven and is filled with wonder at the power and majesty of God who created it all. In transport he cries out: How admirable is Thy name throughout the whole earth! Thou hast overspread the heavens with the proofs of Thy glory and majesty! ¹

Verse 3.—Even babes at the mother's breast proclaim the glory of God and silence the wicked . . . those given to vengeance and violence . . . who do not wish to acknowledge God nor keep His commandments.

A comparison with the Hebrew shows that "*destroy*" is not to be taken in its proper sense. It means to silence their hostile speech.

There are various opinions as to the manner in which "*infants and sucklings*" proclaim the glory of God, but none of them seems satisfactory. Cardinal Bellarmine interprets "*infants and sucklings*" as the humble and lowly. The context, however, demands a literal meaning, and the words are cited by Christ in the literal sense.² Van Steenkiste explains it thus: As the powers of speech are being developed in the child, we mark the gradually unfolding mind and must acknowledge the work of a Divine Intelligence; the guiding hand of a Divine Providence. In other words, we are compelled to acknowledge the power and glory of God. This explanation gives the verse no connection with the context. It would seem better to interpret it thus: When children . . . even sucklings . . . look up to heaven, they ask in their childish manner about the moon and stars; What are they? Whence came they? Who made them? Those who do not wish to acknowledge God and His provi-

¹ Cf. Eccus. xliii.

² Matt. xxi. 16.

dence are silenced because they have no answer for these questions of childish curiosity. The Hebrew "*holel*" means child rather than infant. Among the Hebrews nursing was continued until the third and fourth year. Consequently sucklings would be able to speak as this verse intimates.¹

Verses 4, 5.—Milton has nicely expressed the meaning of these verses in the following words:

"When I behold Thy heavens, Thy fingers' art,
The moon and stars, which Thou so bright hast set
In the pure firmament, then saith my heart,
Oh, what is man that Thou rememberest yet
And think'st upon him!"

"*For*" is to be taken in the sense of "*when*."

Verse 6.—When compared with the other works of creation man seems as nothing, yet God has heaped upon him many blessings and honors. He has crowned him with glory and honor. God created man to His own image and likeness, gave him understanding and free-will, and adorned his soul with grace whereby he becomes partaker of the divine nature.² In a word, he is but little less than the angels.

The present Hebrew text, St. Jerome, Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus have "*less than God*." The Targum, Septuagint, and Vulgate have "*less than angels*." It is thus quoted by St. Paul, *Heb.* ii. 7.

God has subjected all creatures of earth to man's dominion. "*Fill all the earth and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth*" (*Gen.* i. 28).

¹ 2 Mach. vii. 27.

² 2 Peter i. 4.

Verses 8b, 9.—In these verses the Psalmist enumerates some of the creatures subjected to the dominion of man, viz.: domestic animals (sheep and oxen) and the wild beasts that frequent the fields and the forest, the birds of the air, and the fishes that dwell in the deep.

The Hebrew makes the last phrase a further enumeration: the fishes of the sea, and all things living that inhabit the deep.

What this psalm says of mankind in general (son of man) is applicable in its fullest sense to Christ alone, the Son of man *par excellence*. Cf. *Heb.* xi. 6 et seq. Christ is a little less than the angels (Hebr. "*less than God*") in His human nature. Cf. *John* xiv. 28. "*The Father is greater than I.*"

The psalm closes with a repetition of the opening outburst of admiration for the glory and majesty of God revealed in His creatures.

PSALMUS IX

(Part I)

- 1 In finem, pro occultis filii,
Psalmus David.
- 2 Confitebor tibi, Domine, in
toto corde meo;

narrabo omnia mirabilia tua.
- 3 Lætabor et exultabo in te;

psallam nomini tuo, Altis-
sime.
- 4 In convertendo inimicum
meum retrorsum;
infirmabuntur, et peribunt
a facie tua.
- 5 Quoniam fecisti iudicium
meum et causam meam;

sedisti super thronum, qui
iudicas iustitiam.
- 6 Increpasti gentes, et periit
impius.

Nomen eorum delesti in
æternum, et in sæculum
sæculi.
- 7 Inimici defecerunt framæ
in finem,
et civitates eorum destrux-
isti.
Periit memoria eorum cum
sonitu;
- 8 et Dominus in æternum
permanet.

PSALM IX

(Part I)

- 1 Unto the end, for the hidden
things of the Son. A
psalm for David.
- 2 I will give praise to thee,
O Lord, with my whole
heart:
I will relate all thy wonders.
- 3 I will be glad and rejoice
in thee:
I will sing to thy name, O
thou most high.
- 4 When my enemy shall be
turned back:
they shall be weakened and
perish before thy face.
- 5 For thou hast maintained
my judgment and my
cause;
thou hast sat on the throne,
who judgest justice.
- 6 Thou hast rebuked the
Gentiles, and the wicked
one hath perished:
thou hast blotted out their
name for ever and ever.
- 7 The swords of the enemy
have failed unto the end:
and their cities thou hast
destroyed.
Their memory hath perished
with a noise:
- 8 but the Lord remaineth for
ever.

- Paravit in iudicio thronum suum;
 9 et ipse iudicabit orbem terræ in æquitate, iudicabit populos in iustitia.
- He hath prepared his throne in judgment:
 9 and he shall judge the world in equity, he shall judge the people in justice.
- 10 Et factus est Dominus refugium pauperi; adiutor in opportunitatibus, in tribulatione.
- 10 And the Lord is become a refuge for the poor: a helper in due time in tribulation.
- 11 Et sperent in te qui novērunt nomen tuum, quoniam non dereliquisti quærentes te, Domine.
- 11 And let them trust in thee who know thy name: for thou hast not forsaken them that seek thee, O Lord.
- 12 Psallite Domino qui habitat in Sion; annunciate inter Gentes studia ejus;
- 12 Sing ye to the Lord, who dwelleth in Sion: declare his ways among the Gentiles:
- 13 Quoniam requirens sanguinem eorum recordatus est; non est oblitus clamorem pauperum.
- 13 For requiring their blood he hath remembered them: he hath not forgotten the cry of the poor.
- 14 Miserere mei, Domine; vide humilitatem meam de inimicis meis,
- 14 Have mercy on me, O Lord: see my humiliation *which I suffer* from my enemies.
- 15 Qui exaltas me de portis mortis, ut annuntiem omnes laudationes tuas in portis filiæ Sion.
- 15 Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death, that I may declare all thy praises in the gates of the daughter of Sion.
- 16 Exultabo in salutari tuo.
- 16 I will rejoice in thy salvation:
- Infixæ sunt Gentes in initu quem fecerunt;
- the Gentiles have stuck fast in the destruction which they prepared.
- In laqueo isto quem absconderunt comprehensus est pes eorum.
- Their foot hath been taken in the very snare which they hid.
- 17 Cognoscetur Dominus iudicia faciens.
- 17 The Lord shall be known when he executeth judgments.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>In operibus manuum suarum comprehensus est peccator. Higgayon Selah.</p> <p>18 Convertantur peccatores in infernum, omnes Gentes quæ obliviscuntur Deum.</p> <p>19 Quoniam non in finem oblivio erit pauperis; patientia pauperum non peribit in finem.</p> <p>20 Exurge, Domine; non confortetur homo: Judicentur Gentes in conspectu tuo:</p> <p>21 Constitue, Domine, legislatorem super eos; ut sciant Gentes quoniam homines sunt. Selah.</p> | <p>the sinner hath been caught in the works of his own hands. Higgayon Selah.</p> <p>18 The wicked shall be turned into hell, all the nations that forget God.</p> <p>19 For the poor man shall not be forgotten to the end: the patience of the poor shall not perish for ever.</p> <p>20 Arise, O Lord, let not man be strengthened: let the Gentiles be judged in thy sight.</p> <p>21 Appoint, O Lord, a lawgiver over them: that the Gentiles may know themselves to be but men.</p> |
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PSALM IX (Part I).

PSALMS ix and x of the Hebrew text are rightly treated as one in the Septuagint and Vulgate, although the verses are numbered as in the Hebrew, i.e., from 1 to 21, and from 1 to 18. The two parts differ greatly in subject matter, but they are so related as to form one piece. The first part is a thanksgiving for past favors and forms a fitting preparation for the petition of the second part. There is also evidence that the two parts originally formed one alphabetic psalm. The division was probably made for liturgical purposes.

Synopsis.—David praises God (2, 3) for some signal victory over Gentile foes (4–7). God will ever be the just judge of all (8, 9); He is therefore the refuge of the afflicted and the hope of those who trust in

Him (10, 11). He is worthy of praise because He has hearkened to the prayer of the afflicted (12, 13). Verses 14, 15 give the prayer that God has heard. David rejoices because his enemies have met the fate that they planned for him (16, 17). He begs God to complete the work of destruction (18-21).

Verse 1.—“*Pro occultis filii—for the hidden things of the son*” (Hebrew *al-muthlabben*). The Targum has “on the death of his son.” The contents of the psalm exclude this interpretation. The Septuagint, Aquila, and Theodotion translate the inscription as though it read *al-alumoth*, from a root meaning “to hide.” It is more probably the opening words of some well-known song to whose melody the psalm was to be sung. “*Dying is the son,*” or adopting a different pointing, “*Death whitens.*”

Verses 2, 3.—With grateful heart David sings the praises of God, and proposes to publish abroad the wondrous works of Divine Providence in his behalf.

Verses 4, 5.—In these and the following verses David gives the reasons for his praise and gratitude. As proposed in verse 2, he narrates what God has done for him. My enemies were forced to turn and flee; they were weakened (Hebr. stumbled, fell) and perished before Thy face. They were routed and destroyed because Thou, O Lord, hast taken up my cause, and given judgment in my favor. For this purpose didst Thou sit upon the judgment-seat (throne), Thou who judgest with all justice.

The past tense should be used in verse 4, because David is speaking of a victory already won.

Verses 6, 7.—Thou hast beaten down and destroyed the wicked Gentiles who waged war against me, and so complete is their ruin that their very

name has been blotted out for ever. Their weapons are fallen; their depredations are ended; they can work no further ruin. In Hebrew: "*The enemy, their devastations are ended for ever.*"

Thou hast even destroyed their cities and blotted out every vestige of them. So great was their destruction that it was noised abroad, far and wide; or, as some interpret it: as a sound quickly passes away and leaves no trace, so perished their fame and their memory. In Hebrew: "*Their memory has perished with them.*"

This is not a mere repetition of verse 6b, which states that their memory had been blotted out for ever. Here it is said to have been done at one fell stroke.

Verses 8-11.—The enemy has perished miserably, but God remains for ever, the just judge of all. He has established His judgment-seat and will execute judgment with justice and equity. Therefore He is the refuge (Hebr. fortress) of the afflicted and persecuted; He gives help in due time . . . in time of trouble and affliction. Rightly, therefore, do Thy faithful servants trust Thee, for Thou hast never denied Thy aid to those that seek Thy protection.

In the Psalms the word "*poor*" is usually taken in a wide sense to designate a person in trouble and affliction; especially one persecuted by the ungodly.

Verses 12, 13.—Chant the praises of God who dwells in Sion, the Holy City. Publish abroad to the nations the favors He hath shown us. He hath protected the meek and humble (people of Israel) from the persecutions of the wicked; He hath avenged the blood shed at the hands of the ungodly; He hath

not been unmindful of the prayers poured out to Him in time of trouble.

Verses 14-16a.—In these verses David relates the prayers that God had deigned to hear. In time of oppression and danger the people prayed thus: Have mercy on me, O Lord. Behold my humiliation; see the affliction that my enemies are heaping upon me. Do Thou vouchsafe to deliver me from their power. Thou who art wont to deliver me from all dangers (gates) of death, save me now that I may praise Thee at the gates of Jerusalem (the daughter of Sion).

When Thou deliverest me, then shall I rejoice.

In the Vulgate this phrase begins the next verse, but the parallelism shows that it belongs to the prayer which the Psalmist has been giving.

Verse 16b.—Our Gentile foes have been caught in their own trap. They have suffered the very fate they had planned for us; namely, complete overthrow and destruction.

Verse 17.—The Lord shall be recognized (or, the Lord reveals Himself) as the supreme judge of all when He causes the wicked to be taken and destroyed by the very devices they had planned for others.

The Hebrew text adds the words *Higgayon Selah*. The meaning is unknown. It is probably a musical direction.

Verse 18.—This verse expresses the firm conviction of the Psalmist. The wicked Gentiles that neither fear nor worship God shall ever suffer defeat and destruction. They shall be brought down in death (*sheol*). According to the Vulgate, this is a prayer of the Psalmist: Let the work of destruction

be completed. Let all the wicked pagans be brought down in death.

Verse 19.—The wicked Gentiles shall be destroyed because God in His own good time will remember the oppressed and bring to justice all their persecutors. The hope (patience) of the oppressed and the downtrodden shall not be vain.

Verse 20.—After expressing his firm belief that the enemies of God's people will ever suffer defeat, David beseeches God that such may be the case. Arise, O Lord, and exercise Thy power. Let not mortal man rise up defiantly against Thee and against Thy people. Call them before Thee for just judgment.

Verse 21.—Set over them a severe lord and master; take from them their independence; let them learn from experience that they are but weak and helpless men.

The Hebrew reads: "*Put them in fear, O Lord. Let the heathen know they are mortals.*" The meaning is the same as that of the Vulgate. David prays God to break the arrogance and pride of the wicked nations that they may no longer oppose or oppress the people of Israel.

PSALMUS IX

(Part II)

(HEB. X)

1 Ut quid, Domine, recessisti longe,
despicias in opportunitatibus,
in tribulatione?

2 Dum superbit impius, incenditur pauper.

Comprehenduntur in consiliis quibus cogitant.

3 Quoniam laudatur peccator in desideriis animæ suæ, et iniquus benedicitur.

4 Exacerbavit Dominum peccator;
secundum multitudinem iræ suæ, non quæret.

5 Non est Deus in conspectu ejus;
inquinatæ sunt viæ illius in omni tempore.
Auferuntur judicia tua a facie ejus;
omnium inimicorum suorum dominabitur.

6 Dixit enim in corde suo: Non movebor

a generatione in generationem, sine malo.

PSALM IX

(Part II)

(HEB. X)

1 Why, O Lord, hast thou retired afar off?
why dost thou slight us in our wants, in the time of trouble?

2 Whilst the wicked man is proud, the poor is set on fire:

they are caught in the counsels which they devise.

3 For the sinner is praised in the desires of his soul: and the unjust man is blessed.

4 The sinner hath provoked the Lord,
according to the multitude of his wrath he will not seek him:

5 God is not before his eyes:

his ways are filthy at all times.

Thy judgments are removed from his sight:
he shall rule over all his enemies.

6 For he hath said in his heart: I shall not be moved

from generation to generation, and shall be without evil.

- 7 Cujus maledictione os plenum est, et amaritudine, et dolo;
sub lingua ejus labor et dolor.
- 8 Sedet in insidiis cum divitibus in occultis,
ut interficiat innocentem.
- 9 Oculi ejus in pauperem respiciunt;
insidiatur in abscondito, quasi leo in spelunca sua.
Insidiatur ut rapiat pauperem;
rapere pauperem dum atrahit eum.
- 10 In laqueo suo humiliabit eum; inclinabit se,
et cadet cum dominatus fuerit pauperem.
- 11 Dixit enim in corde suo: Oblitus est Deus;
avertit faciem suam, ne videat in finem.
- 12 Exurge, Domine Deus, exaltetur manus tua;
ne obliviscaris pauperem.
- 13 Propter quid irritavit impius Deum?
dixit enim in corde suo: Non requiret.
- 14 Vides, quoniam tu laborem et dolorem consideras,
ut tradas eos in manus tuas.
Tibi derelictus est pauper;
orphano tu eris adjutor.
- 7 His mouth is full of cursing, and of bitterness, and of deceit:
under his tongue are labor and sorrow.
- 8 He sitteth in ambush with the rich in private places, that he may kill the innocent.
- 9 His eyes are upon the poor man:
he lieth in wait in secret like a lion in his den.
He lieth in ambush that he may catch the poor man:
to catch the poor, whilst he draweth him to him.
- 10 In his net he will bring him down,
he will crouch and fall, when he shall have power over the poor.
- 11 For he hath said in his heart: God hath forgotten,
he has turned away his face not to see to the end.
- 12 Arise, O Lord God, let thy hand be exalted:
forget not the poor.
- 13 Wherefore hath the wicked provoked God?
for he hath said in his heart: He will not require it.
- 14 Thou seest it, for thou considerest labor and sorrow: that thou mayest deliver them into thy hands.
To thee is the poor man left:
thou wilt be a helper to the orphan.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>15 <i>Contere brachium peccatoris et maligni;</i>

 <i>queretur peccatum illius, et non inveniatur.</i></p> <p>16 <i>Dominus regnabit in æternum, et in sæculum sæculi;</i>

 <i>peribitis, Gentes, de terra illius.</i></p> <p>17 <i>Desiderium pauperem exaudivit Dominus;</i>
 <i>præparationem cordis eorum audivit auris tua,</i></p> <p>18 <i>Judicare pupillo et humili,</i>

 <i>ut non apponat ultra magnificare se homo super terram.</i></p> | <p>15 Break thou the arm of the sinner and of the malignant:
 his sin shall be sought, and shall not be found.</p> <p>16 The Lord shall reign to eternity, yea, for ever and ever:
 ye Gentiles shall perish from his land.</p> <p>17 The Lord hath heard the desire of the poor:
 thy ear hath heard the preparation of their heart.</p> <p>18 To judge for the fatherless and for the humble,
 that man may no more presume to magnify himself upon earth.</p> |
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PSALM IX (Part II).

Synopsis.—The Psalmist laments the unpunished insolence and presumption of wicked adversaries (1–6), who grow in iniquity because of their impunity (7–11). He beseeches God to protect the just from the persecutions of the wicked (12–15). He is confident of being heard (16–18).

Verses 1, 2.—Why, O Lord, dost Thou stand afar off and hide Thyself in our need and sore distress? The persecuted (the poor) suffer grievously from proud and presumptuous enemies, and are ensnared by their evil plots.

Verses 3, 4.—According to the Vulgate the meaning is: The sinner is praised and applauded (blessed) for his evil designs and thereby encouraged in them. He has provoked the Lord and in his malice and pride he will not seek Him. He cares not for God, but

rather despises Him. Others interpret it thus: In his arrogance and pride, the sinner has provoked the Lord, saying: He will in no wise inquire, i.e., God will not inquire about my sins in order to punish them.

A comparison with the Hebrew shows that it is better to take "*laudatur*" in a reflexive sense; the sinner praises himself, i.e., glories or boasts of his wickedness. "*Benedicatur*" may also be construed in the same way, thus: the unjust man (Hebr. robber, plunderer) praises or blesses himself. As used in Hebrew it means "to bid adieu," "to take leave of," and then, "to renounce or reject." The verses are divided differently in the Hebrew text. The first part of verse 4, "*Exacerbavit Dominum*," belongs to verse 3, and the first part of verse 5, "*Non est Deus in conspectu ejus*," is joined to verse 4 thus:

"*Et iniquus benedicatur, exacerbavit Dominum,
Peccator secundum altitudinem iræ suæ,
[dicit] 'non quæret.' Non est Deus in conspectu ejus.*"

These differences of the Hebrew text give the following reading: For the evil-doer boasts of his soul's desire, and the plunderer rejects and despises the Lord. The wicked, in his scornfulness, says: He will in nowise punish. There is no God! is the sum of all his thoughts.

The general idea of these and the following verses is that the wicked enemies of God's people are becoming bold and insolent because punishment is delayed.

Verses 5, 6.—As noted above, the first part of verse 5 is joined to verse 4 in the Hebrew text. According to the Vulgate it is to be construed with

verse 5, which continues the description of the wicked persecutor of God's people. He does not have God in his mind; he does not consider His commandments; he lives as if there were no God; he acts without any regard whatever for God and His commandments. All his ways are evil. Because he has no fear of punishment he will lord it over his enemies to crush and destroy them. "He flatters himself that his power shall be of long duration and that he shall never suffer adversity."¹ Verse 5 is somewhat different in Hebrew. Delitzsch renders it thus: "*Sure (prosperous) are his ways at all times. Far above are Thy judgments, out of his sight: All his adversaries, he puffeth at them.*" "He takes whatsoever ways he chooses; they always lead to the desired end. Whatever might cast a cloud over his happiness does not trouble him: neither the judgments of God, which are removed high as the heavens out of his sight, nor his adversaries whom he bloweth upon contemptuously. The meaning is not that he drives his enemies away without much difficulty, but that by his proud and haughty bearing he gives them to understand how little they interfere with him."²

Verse 7.—Verses 7–11 describe the ever increasing wickedness of the enemy whom God is slow in punishing. His mouth is full of curses, frauds, and deceit; trouble and mischief are under his tongue ready for any occasion. The wicked man, designing and plotting against the just, is described as a highwayman (8); as a lion pouncing upon his prey (9); and as a hunter entrapping his game (10).

Verses 8, 9a.—He sits in lonely places where he

¹ Kenrick.

² Delitzsch.

can hide and from ambush slay the innocent passer-by. He is ever watching a chance to pounce out upon the weak and unprotected.

The Hebrew text reads: "*He sitteth in the lurking places of the village;*" or, as others render it: "*He sitteth in the vestibules,*" i.e., in the front entrances or porticoes of the houses along the street, whence he pounces out upon the unwary passer-by. This interpretation agrees well with the reading of the Vulgate, since only the rich possess houses so pretentious.

Verse 9b.—He is like a lion that lurks in hiding-places to seize his prey and drag it off to his den.

Verse 10.—The wicked man is compared to a hunter laying snares to entrap his game. He will catch the afflicted man, and when he has him securely entangled in his net he springs upon him as a lion crouches and springs upon his prey.

In Hebrew verses 9b, 10 read: "*He lieth in wait in the secret corner as a lion in his lair, he lieth in wait to carry off the afflicted, he carrieth off the afflicted, drawing him in his net. He croucheth, he cowereth, and there fall into his claws the weak.*"

St. Jerome thus renders verse 10: "And he will crush and lay him low, and rush upon him violently with his strong ones."

Verse 11.—The sinner perseveres in his evil ways because he has persuaded himself that God will not punish his crimes. "The ungodly slays the righteous, thinking within himself: God has forgotten, He has hidden His face, i.e., He does not concern Himself about these poor creatures and does not wish to know anything about them." ¹

¹ Delitzsch.

Verse 12.—Do Thou arise, O Lord, in defense of the afflicted. Let Thy hand be lifted up to protect the just and to punish the wicked.

Verse 13.—How does it come to pass that the wicked are permitted to blaspheme God, saying: He will not punish?

Verse 14.—David protests against the blasphemy of the wicked and expresses his firm belief in the just providence of God. Thou seest, O Lord, the crimes of the wicked. Thou seest the trials and afflictions that the ungodly heap upon the righteous, and Thou takest all these things into Thy care. Thou wilt punish the wicked who have caused this suffering and sorrow; Thou wilt give joy to the afflicted. Therefore the weak and persecuted, those deprived of human help, can leave their burdens all to Thee: Thou art their hope and their protection.

Verse 15.—The Psalmist again begs God to humiliate the arrogant and presumptuous sinners, and to render them harmless. Break their arm; take from them the power of further injury. Let their crimes be sought out and punished until no trace of them remains.

Verse 16.—The Lord shall remain forever to subdue and punish the enemies of His people, therefore the heathen shall be destroyed out of His land.

Verse 17.—The Lord hath heard the supplications of the oppressed; He hath given ear to the desires of their hearts. "God, who searches the hearts and reins, does not wait for their prayers, but attends to the very desires that precede prayer,"¹

¹ Card. Bellarmine.

Verse 18.—The Lord giveth ear to the supplications of the just in order to right the wrongs that the lowly and oppressed suffer at the hands of the wicked. The oppressor shall be so humbled by punishment that he will no more rise up against the people of God.

PSALMUS X

(HEB. XI)

- 1 In finem, Psalmus David.
- 2 In Domino confido; quomodo dicitis animæ meæ;
Transmigra in montem sicut passer?
- 3 Quoniam ecce peccatores intenderunt arcum; paraverunt sagittas suas in pharetra, ut sagittent in obscuro rectos corde;
- 4 Quoniam quæ perfecisti destruxerunt;
justus autem quid fecit?
- 5 Dominus in templo sancto suo;
Dominus in cœlo sedes ejus.
Oculi ejus in pauperem respiciunt, palpebræ ejus interrogant filios hominum.
- 6 Dominus interrogat justum et impium;
qui autem diligit iniquitatem odit animam suam.
- 7 Pluet super peccatores laqueos;
ignis et sulphur, et spiritus procellarum, pars calicis eorum.

PSALM X

(HEB. XI)

- 1 Unto the end. A psalm for David.
- 2 In the Lord I put my trust: how then do you say to my soul:
Get thee away from hence to the mountain like a sparrow?
- 3 For, lo, the wicked have bent their bow; they have prepared their arrows in the quiver; to shoot in the dark the upright of heart.
- 4 For they have destroyed the things which thou hast made:
but what has the just man done?
- 5 The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven.
His eyes look on the poor man: his eyelids examine the sons of men.
- 6 The Lord trieth the just and the wicked:
but he that loveth iniquity hateth his own soul.
- 7 He shall rain snares upon sinners:
fire and brimstone and storms of winds shall be the portion of their cup.

s Quoniam justus Dominus,
et justitiam dilexit;
æquitatem vidit vultus ejus.

s For the Lord is just, and
hath loved justice:
his countenance hath beheld
righteousness.

PSALM X

Synopsis.—David is advised to flee for safety (2–4), but he spurns the advice and trusts to the protection of God, who defends the just and rains down destruction upon the wicked (5–8).

Verse 2.—David's friends repeatedly advise him to flee for safety. They vividly describe the dangers that surround him; they tell him what the enemies have accomplished and finally remind him that he has been able to accomplish nothing. His only salvation is in flight. David rejects their advice, and seemingly reproves them for their lack of courage. "I put all my trust in God," says David, "how, then, can you advise me to flee like a timid bird before the hunter?"

Verses 3, 4.—These two verses give the reason adduced by David's friends when urging him to seek safety in flight. The enemies (sinners) are prepared; their bow is bent, the arrow is made ready, and they will strike in the dark. They are not at open war, but secret enemies plotting to strike down their victims by stealth. They have overturned and destroyed all that David built up; they have rendered useless all his preparation for defense. But what has he, the just man, been able to accomplish? What can he hope to do under such circumstances? Flight is his only means of escape.

In Hebrew verse 4 reads: "*When the pillars are demolished what can the just man do?*" The meaning

seems to be that when the princes and nobles (pillars of state) are murdered (demolished) what can a just man do but flee? This suggests that David's enemies had already dispatched many men of state and that affairs were in a hopeless condition. St. Jerome renders it thus: "For the laws are set at naught. What, then, can a just man expect when law is no longer a protection?"

Verses 5, 6.—When all human hope has vanished David still firmly trusts in God. From His throne in heaven God looks down upon the affairs of men, and closely scrutinizes all, both good and bad. He will repay each and every one according to his works. He rewards the good and punishes the wicked. Therefore he that loves iniquity hates his own soul because he brings down upon himself the just punishment of his sins.

The Hebrew text has an easier reading: The Lord tries the just man; but the wicked and the lover of violence His soul hates, i.e., the Lord rewards the just man, but He sincerely hates the wicked and the violent.

Verse 7.—This verse shows what the wrath of God has prepared for those who love iniquity. He will rain down upon them dire calamities (snares): fire and brimstone and the scorching blasts of the simoom shall be their portion—the punishments meted out to the wicked.

Some take "*snares*" as a reference to the lightning, "for the lightning striking out its course and traveling from one point in the distance, bending itself like a serpent, may really be compared to a snare, or noose, thrown down from heaven."¹

¹ Delitzsch.

The parallelism of the verse is improved by punctuating as follows:

“ He shall rain upon the wicked, snares, fire, and brimstone: and a stormy blast shall be the portion of their cup.”

Fire and brimstone agree well with *rain* as an evident allusion to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha (*Gen. xix. 24*).

“ Portion of the cup ” is a common figure of speech in the Sacred Scriptures. It refers to the banquet cup, a portion of which was measured out to each one by the head of the family. Hence it means the part or portion which falls to one's lot. Hence also one's lot or fortune whether good or bad.

Verse 8.—God punishes the wicked because He is just and loves the works of justice. His countenance beholds righteousness, i.e., He favors and rewards the just. The Hebrew has: *“ The upright shall behold His face.”*

PSALMUS XI

(HEB. XII)

- 1 In finem, pro octava, Psalmus David.
- 2 Saluum me fac, Domine, quoniam defecit sanctus: quoniam diminutæ sunt veritates a filiis hominum.
- 3 Vana locuti sunt unusquisque ad proximum suum;
labia dolosa, in corde et corde locuti sunt.
- 4 Disperdat Dominus universa labia dolosa, et linguam magniloquam.
- 5 Qui dixerunt: Linguam nostram magnificabimus; labia nostra a nobis sunt. Quis noster Dominus est?
- 6 Propter miseriam inopum, et gemitum pauperum,
nunc exurgam, dicit Dominus.
Ponam in salutari; fiducialiter agam in eo.
- 7 Eloquentia Domini, eloquia casta;
argentum igne examinatum, probatum terræ,
purgatum septuplum.

PSALM XI

(HEB. XII)

- 1 Unto the end; for the octave, a psalm for David.
- 2 Save me, O Lord, for there is now no saint:
truths are decayed from among the children of men.
- 3 They have spoken vain things every one to his neighbor:
with deceitful lips, and with a double heart have they spoken.
- 4 May the Lord destroy all deceitful lips,
and the tongue that speaketh proud things.
- 5 Who have said: We will magnify our tongue;
our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?
- 6 By reason of the misery of the needy, and the groans of the poor,
now will I arise, saith the Lord.
I will set him in safety; I will deal confidently in his regard.
- 7 The words of the Lord are pure words:
as silver tried by the fire, purged from the earth,
refined seven times.

8 Tu, Domine, servabis nos,	8 Thou, O Lord, wilt preserve us:
et custodies nos a generatione hac in æternum.	and keep us from this generation for ever.
9 In circuitu impii ambulans.	9 The wicked walk round about:
Secundum altitudinem tuam multiplicasti filios hominum.	according to thy highness, thou hast multiplied the children of men.

PSALM XI

THALHOFER assigns this psalm to the time of David's persecution by Saul. The Psalmist then had occasion to learn that truthfulness and fidelity were virtues scarcely to be found.

Synopsis.—David prays for protection because the wicked are multiplied upon the earth (2, 3). He begs God to stay the rising tide of evil (4, 5). God promises aid (6), and His promise is worthy of all credence (7). Hence there is no cause for fear (8, 9).

Verses 2, 3.—Help us,¹ O Lord, because the upright and the faithful have disappeared; or better, because piety and fidelity are no more. There is no one to be trusted; no one to be relied upon. All are given up to lying, deceit, and duplicity of heart.

Instead of "*deceitful lips*," the Hebrew has "*lips of smoothness*," i.e., with duplicity of heart they speak pleasing and flattering words. Outwardly they pretend great friendship, within they are bitter enemies.

Verses 8, 9.—May God punish and bring to naught the deceitful and perverse who boast of their wickedness, saying: We will give free scope to our tongues; our lips are our own, we will use them as we wish, and who shall say us nay! Some render the Hebrew: "*Our lips are with us: who is lord over us?*"

¹ Verse 8 shows that David prays for himself and followers.

i.e., our lips are our weapons (or, our allies), and who is the man that can prevail against their flattery and deceit?

Verse 6.—The Psalmist now represents God as speaking in answer to his prayers. Because of the trials and afflictions of the just, I will gird myself for their protection. I will free them from the power of these wicked ones; I will put them out of harm's way. I will act with the determination and energy becoming a just judge.

The Hebrew text is variously rendered: "*I will set him in safety, who desireth it;*" or, "*I will set in safety him whom they afflict.*" Still others render it: "*I will set him in safety, I will shine forth for him,*" i.e., I will protect, or favor, him.

Verse 7.—The words of the Lord are pure, i.e., free from all deceit and therefore worthy of all credence. They are as silver seven times purified by fire.

The meaning of "*probatum terræ*" is not known. Thalhoffer suggests that it might mean a standard accepted throughout the world. Knabenbauer adopts this meaning. It can not mean freed from dross, as in the Douay Version.

Verses 8, 9.—God has promised assistance (6), and His promises are always fulfilled (7). Therefore we have nothing to fear. As befits His majesty (highness) God will protect us from this wicked generation that surrounds us on every side.

The Greek word here rendered "*hast multiplied*" means rather to save or protect. The Hebrew is very obscure in this passage. St. Jerome, and following him, the Authorized Version, translate it: "*The wicked are on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.*"

PSALMUS XII

(HEB. XIII)

- 1 In finem, Psalmus David.
 Usquequo, Domine, oblivis-
 ceris me in finem?
 Usquequo avertis faciem
 tuam a me?
- 2 Quamdiu ponam consilia in
 anima mea,
 dolorem in corde meo per
 diem?
- 3 Usquequo exaltabitur ini-
 micus meus super me?
- 4 Respice, et exaudi me, Do-
 mine Deus meus.
 Illumina oculos meos, ne
 unquam obdormiam in
 morte;
- 5 ne quando dicat inimicus
 meus: Prævalui adversus
 eum.
 Qui tribulant me exultabunt
 si motus fuero;
- 6 ego autem in misericordia
 tua speravi.
 Exultabit cor meum in sal-
 utari tuo.
 Cantabo Domino qui bona
 tribuit mihi;
 et psallam nomini Domini
 altissimi.

PSALM XII

(HEB. XIII)

- 1 Unto the end, a psalm for
 David.
 How long, O Lord, wilt thou
 forget me unto the end?
 how long dost thou turn
 away thy face from me?
- 2 How long shall I take coun-
 sels in my soul,
 sorrow in my heart all the
 day?
- 3 How long shall my enemy be
 exalted over me?
- 4 Consider, and hear me, O
 Lord my God.
 Enlighten my eyes that I
 never sleep in death:
- 5 lest at any time my enemy
 say: I have prevailed
 against him.
 They that trouble me will
 rejoice when I am moved:
- 6 but I have trusted in thy
 mercy.
 My heart shall rejoice in thy
 salvation:
 I will sing to the Lord, who
 giveth me good things:
 yea I will sing to the name of
 the Lord the most high.

PSALM XII

THIS psalm probably belongs to the time of David's flight from Saul.

Synopsis.—A sigh of complaint (1-3) is followed by a gentler prayer (4, 5), and this in turn is followed by the calm and peaceful certainty of being heard (6).

Verses 1-3.—The Psalmist has long been in trouble and affliction. He feels abandoned by God. With anxiety of soul has he been planning for safety, only to see his most cherished devices fail. The situation seems hopeless. Sorrow fills his heart, and the enemy are prevailing against him. In his distress he cries out with the oft-repeated "*How long, O Lord! Hast Thou deserted me forever? Am I left without hope of escape?*"

Verses 4, 5.—The plaints of the Psalmist (1-3) are those of a man who still has confidence in God's goodness and protection. He has not lost hope, but turns to God and beseeches His aid. Hide Thy face no longer but look upon me with Thy benign countenance. Deliver me from the dangers of death lest my enemies have occasion to rejoice, saying: We have prevailed against him, he is no more.

Verse 6.—But I fear no such ending; I am confident of success because I have placed my trust in Thy mercy. I will rejoice in the deliverance which Thou wilt surely give. I will praise Thee, O Lord, who bestowest upon me the favor of deliverance and safety

This song, as it were, casts up constantly lessening waves, until it becomes still as a glassy sea, and the only motion discernible is the joyous ripple of

calm repose. Peace reigns in the storm-tossed soul of the suppliant.¹ The last phrase, "*I will sing to the name of the Lord the most high,*" is not found in the Hebrew. It seems to have crept in here from Ps. ix. 3.

¹ Adapted from Delitzsch.

PSALMUS'XIII

(HEB. XIV)

1 In finem, Psalmus David.

Dixit insipiens in corde suo:
Non est Deus.

Corrupti sunt, et abominabiles facti sunt in studiis suis;

non est qui faciat bonum,
non est usque ad unum.

2 Dominus de cœlo prospexit
super filios hominum,

ut videat si est intelligens,
aut requirens Deum.

3 Omnes declinaverunt, simul
inutiles facti sunt.

Non est qui faciat bonum,
non est usque ad unum.

*Sepulchrum patens est guttur
eorum;*

*linguis suis dolose agebant
(Ps. v. 14);*

*venenum aspidum sub labiis
eorum (Ps. cxxxix. 4).*

*Quorum os maledictione et
amaritudine plenum est (Ps.
ix. (x). 7);*

*veloces pedes eorum ad effun-
dendum sanguinem.*

*Contritio et infelicitas in viis
eorum,*

PSALM XIII

(HEB. XIV)

1 Unto the end, a psalm for
David.

The fool hath said in his
heart: There is no God.

They are corrupt, and are
become abominable in
their ways:

there is none that doth good,
no not one.

2 The Lord hath looked down
from heaven upon the
children of men,

to see if there be any that
understand and seek God.

3 They are all gone aside,
they are become unprofit-
able together:

there is none that doth good,
no not one.

*Their throat is an open sepul-
cher:*

*with their tongues they acted
deceitfully (Ps. v. 14);*

*The poison of asps is under
their lips (Ps. cxxxix. 4).*

*Their mouth is full of cursing
and bitterness (Ps. ix. (x)
7);*

*their feet are swift to shed
blood.*

*Destruction and unhappiness
in their ways;*

et viam pacis non cognoverunt
(Is. lix. 7-8):
non est timor Dei ante oculos
eorum (Ps. xxxv. 2).

and the way of peace they have
not known (Is. lix. 7-8):
there is no fear of God before
their eyes (Ps. xxxv. 2).

4 Nonne cognoscent omnes qui
operantur iniquitatem,
qui devorant plebem meam
sicut escam panis?

4 Shall not all they know that
work iniquity,
who devour my people as
they eat bread?

5 Dominum non invocaverunt;
illic trepidaverunt timore,
ubi non erat timor.

5 They have not called upon
the Lord:
there have they trembled
for fear, where there was
no fear.

6 Quoniam Dominus in genera-
tione justa est,
consilium inopis confudistis;
quoniam Dominus spes ejus
est.

6 For the Lord is in the just
generation:
you have confounded the
counsel of the poor man,
but the Lord is his hope.

7 Quis dabit ex Sion salutare
Israel?
cum averterit Dominus cap-
tivitatem plebis suæ,
exultabit Jacob, et lætabitur
Israel.

7 Who shall give out of Sion
the salvation of Israel?
When the Lord shall have
turned away the captivity
of his people,
Jacob shall rejoice and Israel
shall be glad.

PSALM XIII

WITH a few slight changes this psalm is repeated in Book II as Psalm lii, which is probably "an adaptation to some signal overthrow of a Gentile invader, perhaps to that recorded in 4 Kings xix."¹

Synopsis.—The enemies of Israel are sunk in moral degradation because they have persuaded themselves that there is no God (1-3), but He takes note of their evil works (4-6). A longing for better times (7).

Verse 1.—The sinner has persuaded himself (said in his heart) that there is no God and straightway

¹ M'Swiney.

proceeds to regulate his life according to that belief. Because they do not fear nor even acknowledge God, the heathen foes of Israel have become abominable in all their ways. "*As they liked not to have God in their knowledge, God delivered them up to a reprobate sense*"; and they were "*filled with all iniquity, malice, fornication, avarice, wickedness, full of envy, murder, contention, deceit, malignity, whisperers, detractors, hateful to God.*"¹

In Holy Scripture the term "*fool*" is frequently used as a synonym for wicked or ungodly. It is here used in a collective sense as the context clearly shows. The words "*no not one*" are not found here in the Hebrew text nor in *Ps. lii*. They were probably taken from verse 3.

Verses 2, 3.—The Psalmist represents God as looking out over these wicked enemies of His people to see if there be any who act intelligently by seeking to know and serve Him. The result only serves to confirm the words of the Psalmist. No just are found—not even one. They have all turned aside from the way of righteousness and become workers of iniquity (unprofitable).

"*Intelligens*" is used in opposition to "*insipiens*" of verse 1. The particle "*aut*" should be omitted because "*requirens Deum*" is an explanatory phrase in apposition with "*intelligens.*" If there be any that understand, i.e., if there be any that seek God.

Between verses 3 and 4 we find several verses from other parts of Scripture as noted above in the text of the psalm. St. Jerome ascribes their presence here to the mistake of some copyist who imag-

¹ Rom. i. 28 et seq.

ined they belong here because St. Paul quotes them in connection with verse 3 of this psalm.¹

Verse 4.—These enemies are given up to iniquity, and persecute my people with as little concern and with as little thought of sin as if they were eating bread. Are they devoid of all understanding? Do they not know that their sins must bring down upon them just punishment?

Some interpreters consider this verse a continuation of the words of God describing the result of His examination of the enemies of His people. Others take them to be the words of the Psalmist. As he was king, he could truly say "*my people.*"

Verses 5, 6.—"*They have not called upon the Lord*" belongs to verse 4 in Hebrew, and stands as a climax to the perversity of Israel's enemies. They have given up all worship of God. Or, it may mean that they have persevered in their sin because they have rejected God, and have no fear of punishment. But the day shall come when they who knew no fear will tremble with terror because the Lord is with the just and will punish their persecutors with dread severity. Then, apostrophizing the enemy, the Psalmist says: "You may frustrate the counsel of the afflicted, but to no purpose, for the Lord is his hope," or, as others interpret it: "Think you that you can frustrate the counsel of the afflicted, seeing that the Lord is his refuge?"

In Hebrew verse 5 reads: "*Then were they in great fear, for God is in the righteous generation.*"

"*Where there was no fear,*" was probably introduced from lli. 6 which reads: "*Then were they in great fear, when there was no fear: for God scattered*

¹ Rom. iii, 13-18.

the bones of him that encamped round about thee, thou didst put them to shame, for God has despised them."

Verse 7.—Many interpreters consider this verse a liturgical addition dating from the time of the Captivity or some other national calamity. Knabenbauer and Delitzsch note that such an opinion is not at all necessary because the Hebrew words are also used figuratively in the sense of turning away misfortune. (Cf. *Job* xlii. 10; *Ezech.* xvi. 53.) Even Hitzig, who regards Jeremias as the author of the psalm, renders it thus: "If Yahveh would but turn the misfortune of His people!"

"*Who shall give?*" is a Hebraism expressing a wish or supplication. May God who dwells on Sion deliver His people from affliction and oppression. Then shall they rejoice and be glad.

PSALMUS XIV

(HEB. XV)

- 1 Psalmus David.
Domine, quis habitabit in
tabernaculo tuo?
aut quis requiescet in monte
sancto tuo?
- 2 Qui ingreditur sine macula,
et operatur justitiam;
- 3 Qui loquitur veritatem in
corde suo;
qui non egit dolum in lingua
sua;
nec fecit proximo suo malum,
et opprobrium non accepit
adversus proximos suos.
- 4 Ad nihilum deductus est in
conspectu ejus malignus;
timentes autem Dominum
glorificat.
Qui jurat proximo suo, et
non decipit;
- 5 qui pecuniam suam non dedit
ad usuram,
et munera super innocentem
non accepit.
- Qui facit hæc non movebitur
in æternum.

PSALM XIV

(HEB. XV)

- 1 A psalm of David.
Lord, who shall dwell in
thy tabernacle?
or who shall rest in thy
holy hill?
- 2 He that walketh without
blemish, and worketh jus-
tice:
- 3 He that speaketh truth in
his heart,
who hath not used deceit
in his tongue:
Nor hath done evil to his
neighbor:
nor taken up a reproach
against his neighbors.
- 4 In his sight the malignant
is brought to nothing:
but he glorifieth them that
fear the Lord.
He that sweareth to his
neighbor, and deceiveth
not;
- 5 he that hath not put out
his money to usury,
nor taken bribes against
the innocent:
- He that doth these things
shall not be moved for
ever.

PSALM XIV

MANY believe that this psalm was composed for the removal of the Ark of the Covenant from the house of Obbededom to Jerusalem.¹ It seems to have been sung by two voices or choirs. The first choir sang the questions of verse 1 which were answered by the second choir singing verses 2-5a. Verse 5b was probably sung as a chorus.

Synopsis.—The psalm treats of the dispositions necessary to worship God with profit to one's soul. Since the special manifestation of God's presence over the Ark of the Covenant prefigured the Blessed Sacrament, this psalm may well be taken as indicating the dispositions necessary for worthy reception of holy communion. It may also be applied to the glories of heaven. In this sense the first verse is equivalent to the question of the young man in the Gospel: "*What good shall I do that I may have life everlasting?*"²

Verse 1.—Who is worthy, O Lord, to enter Thy tabernacle and dwell there as Thy favored guest? Who is worthy to be counted a citizen of Sion, the holy mountain where Thou dost manifest Thy presence amongst us?

Verses 2, 3.—The Psalmist now answers the question of verse 1. The worthy guest of God is he who is blameless in all his ways; who speaks the truth without deceit or dissimulation; who injures not his neighbor in any manner, neither in his goods nor in his reputation.

A comparison with the Hebrew shows that "to

¹ 2 Kings, vi. 12.

² Matt. xix. 16.

take up a reproach " means to slander or calumniate, to bring reproach upon a person.

Verses 4, 5a.—In these verses the Psalmist continues his description of the worthy guest in God's house. He condemns, or rather has no regard for the ungodly, but the just man he holds in high esteem. He is faithful in all his promises. He does not exact recompense for the favor of a loan, and he will not accept bribes to the detriment of the innocent.

In Hebrew the last part of verse 4 reads: "*Should he swear to do harm, yet will he not change,*" i.e., he will keep a promise even to his own detriment.

The Hebrews were forbidden to accept interest from one of their own nation, but might exact it from others. "*Thou shalt not lend to thy brother money to usury, nor corn, nor any other thing: but to the stranger. To thy brother thou shalt lend that which he wanteth without usury.*"¹

Verse 5b.—We would naturally expect the conclusion to be: Such a one is worthy to enter the Tabernacle of the Lord and dwell there. Instead, we have a conclusion of similar import but different in form, viz., "*He that doth these things shall not be moved for ever,*" i.e., he shall be worthy of God's favor and loving protection: he shall be happy and prosperous.

¹ Deut. xxii. 19-20.

PSALM XV

(HEB. XVI)

1 Tituli inscriptio, ipsi David.

Conserva me, Domine, quoniam speravi in te.

2 Dixi Domino: Deus meus es tu,
quoniam bonorum meorum non egēs.

3 Sanctis, qui sunt in terra ejus,
mirificavit omnes voluntates meas in eis.

4 Multiplicati sunt infirmitates eorum, postea acceleraverunt.

Non congregabo conventicula eorum de sanguinibus;

nec memor ero nominum eorum per labia mea.

5 Dominus pars hereditatis meæ, et calicis mei:

tu es qui restitues hereditatem meam mihi.

6 Funes ceciderunt mihi in præclaris;
etenim hereditas mea præclara est mihi.

7 Benedicam Dominum qui tribuit mihi intellectum;

insuper et usque ad noctem increpuerunt me renes mei.

PSALMUS XV

(HEB. XVI)

1 The inscription of a title to David himself.

Preserve me, O Lord, for I have put my trust in thee.

2 I have said to the Lord, thou art my God,
for thou hast no need of my goods.

3 To the saints, who are in his land,
he hath made wonderful all my desires in them.

4 Their infirmities were multiplied: afterward they made haste.

I will not gather together their meetings for blood offerings:

nor will I be mindful of their names by my lips.

5 The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup:

it is thou that wilt restore my inheritance to me.

6 The lines are fallen unto me in goodly places:
for my inheritance is goodly to me.

7 I will bless the Lord, who hath given me understanding:

moreover my reins also have corrected me even till night.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>8 Providebam Dominum in
conspectu meo semper,
quoniam a dextris est mihi,
ne commovear.</p> <p>9 Propter hoc lætatum est cor
meum, et exultavit lingua
mea;
insuper et caro mea re-
quiescet in spe.</p> <p>10 Quoniam non derelinques
animam meam in inferno,
nec dabis sanctum tuum
videre corruptionem.</p> <p>11 Notas mihi fecisti vias vitæ;

adimplebis me lætitia cum
vultu tuo:
delectationes in dextera tua
usque in finem.</p> | <p>8 I set the Lord always in
my sight.
for he is at my right hand,
that I be not moved.</p> <p>9 Therefore my heart hath
been glad, and my tongue
hath rejoiced:
moreover my flesh also shall
rest in hope.</p> <p>10 Because thou wilt not leave
my soul in hell;
nor wilt thou give thy holy
one to see corruption.</p> <p>11 Thou hast made known to
me the ways of life,
thou shalt fill me with joy
with thy countenance:
at thy right hand are de-
lights even to the end.</p> |
|--|---|

PSALM XV

Synopsis.—David addresses himself to God as his only good (1, 2), and salutes the righteous as his chief delight on earth (3). He abhors those who turn from God to the worship of idols (4). God is his portion and he is well pleased therewith (5-7). He keeps God ever before his eyes (8). Since God is his portion he fears not death, but looks forward to a glorious resurrection (9-11).

"Tituli inscriptio—the inscription of a title," i.e., a monumental inscription. These words are found in the title of six psalms (xv, lv, lix). The meaning of the Hebrew word "*mikhtam*" is unknown. The Targum renders it "the upright engraving." Briggs follows the interpretation of the Rabbis who derive it from "*kethem*," gold. Hence a golden piece. "This indeed indicates their character, for they

are artistic in form and choice in their contents." ¹

Delitzsch says: "*Mikhtam* appears to mean first of all an inscription and then to be equivalent to an inscription-poem or epigraph, a poem containing pithy sayings." According to Thirtle it means a private prayer or meditation.

Verses 1, 2.—Save me, O Lord, because I trust entirely in Thee. I have said: "Thou art my God because Thou art above all, and independent of all. Thou needest not that any one should give Thee aught. Though I have nothing to offer, yet may I trust in Thee." St. Jerome renders the Hebrew thus: "It is not well with me without Thee," i.e., I have no other good than Thee, my God and my all.

The Authorized Version renders it (wrongly): "My goodness extendeth not to Thee, but to the saints," etc., i.e., my good deeds are not deserving of anything from Thee, but from my fellowman alone; or, as the poet says,

" Merit lives from man to man
And not from man, O Lord, to Thee." ²

Verse 3.—God has enkindled in me a great affection for His pious ones on earth. The Hebrew text of this verse is very obscure. The most probable meaning, and the one that agrees well with the Vulgate, is the following: And to the saints who are on earth (I have said): These are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.

This gives a good connection with the preceding verse. I have said to the Lord: Thou art my God,

¹ Briggs.

² Tennyson "In Memoriam."

my only good; and to the saints: Ye are my chief delight. David is thus described as one who "glorifieth them that fear the Lord."¹

Verse 4a.—In the Vulgate this sentence has no meaning. The Hebrew is also beset with difficulties. It probably means: Multiplied be the sorrows of those who turn aside from God and hasten to the worship of idols.

Verse 4b.—David loves the saints and glorifies them that fear the Lord: but he abhors apostates and their idolatry. "In his sight the malignant is brought to nothing."¹ He will have no part in their abominable rites; he will not even allow their names to pass his lips. The Hebrew reads: "*I will not pour out their drink offerings of blood, nor take their names upon my lips.*"

Some understand offerings of blood to be offerings in which blood was poured out in libation. Others, perhaps more correctly, understand it as libations poured out with bloodstained hands. The names that David will not pronounce may refer to the false gods or to their worshipers.

Verse 5.—The wicked hasten after false gods and the pleasures of the world, but as for me, the Lord is my portion, my heritage, my only good. Among the Hebrews, heredity was the securest of all titles. Hence the meaning: Thou art my most secure possession, my most certain good; and Thou, O Lord, wilt preserve me in its enjoyment.

The Church puts these words upon the lips of all who enter the ranks of her clergy. When receiving Tonsure each candidate repeats this verse. In the division of the Promised Land the tribe of Levi

¹ Ps. xiv. 4.

received no inheritance for "*the Lord said to Aaron: You shall possess nothing in their land, neither shall you have a portion among them: I am thy portion and inheritance in the midst of the children of Israel.*"¹

Verse 6.—The lines (by which land was measured off) have fallen in a most desirable place; my portion is the best that could have fallen to my lot and I am well pleased with it. I rejoice that God is my inheritance.

Verse 7.—I will bless the Lord who gave me the wisdom (understanding) to choose Him for my portion, and to place all my hope in Him. All the day long even until night (or according to the Hebrew; even at night when free from the cares and anxieties of the day) I am admonished by the inward voice of conscience (reins) to be grateful to God for His graces and blessings.

Verse 8.—I have God ever before my eyes. He is the object of all my hopes and desires; He is ever near me with His loving protection and assistance that I may never be overcome nor fall away from Him.

Verses 9-11.—Because he has chosen God for his inheritance and trusts in Him as his protector, David rejoices and rests secure in the thought that this inheritance is not for this world alone, but for all eternity. Therefore he can face death without fear. Thou wilt not commit my soul to *sheol* for ever; Thou wilt not leave my body to eternal corruption. I shall die; my soul shall enter the abode of the dead (*sheol*); my body shall be committed to the corruption of the grave; but Thou who art my portion and my inheritance wilt not leave me thus separated

¹ Num. xviii. 20.

from Thee, and from the light of Thy countenance. Thou wilt raise me up again and fill me with the joy of beholding Thy countenance. Of this joy there shall be no end, for Thy right hand is filled with inexhaustible delights.

The words of verse 10 taken in their fullest sense were realized only in the Son of David. Both St. Peter and St. Paul inform us that this verse is a real prophecy of Christ's resurrection. St. Peter says that the words in question could not refer to David for "*he died and was buried; and his sepulcher is with us to this present day . . . He spoke of the resurrection of Christ. For neither was He left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption.*"¹ St. Paul says: "*And therefore in another place also he saith: Thou shalt not suffer Thy holy one to see corruption. For David, when he had served in his generation, according to the will of God, slept: and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption. But He whom God raised from the dead, saw no corruption.*"²

¹ Acts ii. 29-31.

² Acts xiii. 35-37,

PSALMUS XVI

(HEB. XVII)

- 1 Oratio David.
Exaudi, Domine, justitiam
meam;
intende deprecationem
meam.
Auribus percipe orationem
meam,
non in labiis dolosis.
- 2 De vultu tuo judicium
meum prodeat;
oculi tui videant æquitates.
- 3 Probasti cor meum, et visi-
tasti nocte;
igne me examinasti, et non
est inventa in me iniqui-
tas.
- 4 Ut non loquatur os meum
opera hominum,
propter verba labiorum tuo-
rum ego custodivi vias
duras.
- 5 Perfice gressus meos in sem-
itis tuis,
ut non moveantur vestigia
mea.
- 6 Ego clamavi, quoniam ex-
audisti me, Deus;

inclina aurem tuam mihi,
et exaudi verba mea.
- 7 Mirifica misericordias tuas,

PSALM XVI

(HEB. XVII)

- 1 The prayer of David.
Hear, O Lord, my justice:

attend to my supplication.

Give ear unto my prayer,

which proceedeth not from
deceitful lips.
- 2 Let my judgment come forth
from thy countenance:
let thy eyes behold the
things that are equitable.
- 3 Thou hast proved my heart,
and visited it by night,
thou hast tried me by fire:
and iniquity hath not
been found in me.
- 4 That my mouth may not
speak the works of men:
for the sake of the words
of thy lips, I have kept
hard ways.
- 5 Perfect thou my goings in
thy paths:
that my footsteps be not
moved.
- 6 I have cried to thee, for
thou, O God, hast heard
me:
O incline thy ear unto
me, and hear my words.
- 7 Shew forth thy wonderful
mercies:

- qui salvos facis sperantes
in te.
- 8 A resistentibus dexteræ tuæ
custodi me,
ut pupillam oculi.
Sub umbra alarum tuarum
protege me,
- 9 a facie impiorum qui me
affixerunt.
Inimici mei animam meam
circumdederunt;
- 10 adipem suum concluserunt;
os eorum locutum est su-
perbiam.
- 11 Projicientes me hunc cir-
cumdederunt me;
- oculos suos statuerunt de-
clinare in terram.
- 12 Susceperunt me sicut leo
paratus ad prædam,
et sicut catulus leonis hab-
itans in abditis.
- 13 Exurge, Domine; præveni
eum, et supplantâ eum;
eripe animam meam ab
impio,
- 14 frameam tuam ab inimicis
manus tuæ.
Domine, a paucis de terra
divide eos in vita eorum;
- de absconditis tuis adim-
pletus est venter eorum.
Saturati sunt filii,
et dimiserunt reliquias suas
parvulis suis.
- 15 Ego autem in justitia ap-
parebo conspectui tuo;
satiabor cum apparuerit
gloria tua.
- thou who savest them that
trust in thee.
- 8 From them that resist thy
right hand keep me,
as the apple of thy eye.
Protect me under the
shadow of thy wings.
- 9 From the face of the wicked
who have afflicted me.
My enemies have surround-
ed my soul:
- 10 they have shut up their fat:
their mouth hath spoken
proudly.
- 11 They have cast me forth
and now they have sur-
rounded me:
they have set their eyes
bowing down to the earth.
- 12 They have taken me, as a
lion prepared for the prey;
and as a young lion dwelling
in secret places.
- 13 Arise, O Lord, disappoint
him and supplant him;
deliver my soul from the
wicked one:
- 14 thy sword from the enemies
of thy hand.
O Lord, divide them from
the few of the earth in
their life:
their belly is filled from thy
hidden stores.
They are full of children:
and they have left to their
little ones the rest of
their substance.
- 15 But as for me, I will appear
before thy sight in justice:
I shall be satisfied when
thy glory shall appear.

PSALM XVI

THE text of this psalm has been considerably corrupted, and in some places gives no meaning.

Synopsis.—David entreats God to hear his cause for he is innocent (1-5). He pleads for deliverance because God never deserts those who trust in Him (6-9). He describes his persecutors (10-12), and renews his petitions for help (13, 14). He expresses confidence in God's justice (15).

"*Oratio*"—"A prayer." This is the title of five psalms (xvi, lxxxv, lxxxix, ci, cxli) indicating their nature—a prayer or supplication.

Verse 1.—David beseeches God to hear his just cause, and give ear to the prayers that proceed from truthful lips. The insistence of his prayer denotes grave dangers.

Verse 2.—Do Thou give judgment and maintain my cause, for Thou regardest only what is just and equitable. Thou art not a God that willest iniquity.¹ Let Thine eyes attend to my innocence and the justice of my cause.

Verse 3.—David protests his innocence. Thou hast examined the inmost secrets of my heart, even at night when alone and unsuspecting. Thou hast examined me with a searching trial, even as metals are tried by fire, and yet Thou didst find no fault in me.

This verse may also be construed as a conditional sentence: If Thou shouldst prove my heart, and visit it by night; if Thou shouldst examine me by fire, yet wouldst Thou find no fault in me.

¹ Ps. v. 5.

Verse 4.—In order to get any meaning from this verse we must read *non locutum est* instead of *ut non loquatur*, thus: “My mouth hath not praised nor approved (spoken) the evil works of men: and because of Thy law (the words of Thy lips) I have kept me on the narrow and difficult path of justice.” The Hebrew joins the first part of this verse to the preceding, thus: “*Iniquity hath not been found in me: I am resolved that my mouth shall not transgress.*” Verse 4 then reads: “*As for the works of man, by the words of Thy lips: I have kept me from the ways of the robber.*”

Verse 5.—According to the Vulgate, David asks divine assistance to continue in the path of justice. According to the Hebrew, this verse is a continuation of the Psalmist's declaration of innocence. “*My steps have held fast to Thy paths: my footsteps have not slipped.*”

Verses 6, 7.—I come before Thee with my petitions because Thou art wont to hear me when I cry unto Thee. Do Thou deign to hear me now. Manifest Thy wonderful mercy, for Thou art the protector of those who trust Thee.

Verses 8, 9a.—These verses give us the prayer which the Psalmist begs God to hear: “Preserve me from those who rise up against Thee. Guard me as Thou wouldst guard the very apple of Thy eye. Protect me as a bird protects her fledglings beneath the wing. Defend me from the wicked who afflict me.”

The Hebrew text joins the first words of verse 8 to the preceding and reads as follows: “*Manifest Thy wonderful mercies, Thou who art the helper of those who seek refuge at Thy right hand, from those who*

rise up against them. Keep them as the apple of the eye; hide me in the shadow of Thy wings from the wicked who would destroy me; from my deadly enemies, who compass me about." Others render it thus: "Give a wondrous manifestation of Thy loving-kindness, Thou who savest by Thy right hand them that take refuge in Thee: from them that rise up against them," etc.

Verses 9b, 10.—David now describes his enemies and the manner in which they harass him. "They have surrounded me and show no mercy (shut up their fat); they are filled with pride and insolence."

Verses 11, 12.—The enemy have driven me out, and now they surround me bent on my destruction. They have resolved (set their eyes) to bring me down. They are minded to seize upon me as a lion springs upon its prey and crushes it to earth. They are like a young lion lurking in secret, waiting an opportunity to spring upon some animal as it passes by.

The Hebrew is usually rendered somewhat as follows: "At every step they have surrounded me; their purpose is to smite down to the earth. He is like a lion that is greedy to raven, and like a young lion lurking in the lair."

By some emendations of the text Briggs obtains the following rendering: "They advance,¹ now they march about, they fix their eyes; they purpose to camp in the land, they maltreat as a lion; they are greedy for prey, they are like a young lion lurking in secret places."

Verses 13, 14a.—David renews his petition for help. He is in imminent danger. The enemy are ready to fall upon him; they are ready to spring at

¹ Thus also St. Jerome.

him like a lion at its prey. Therefore he begs God to come between him and the enemy and save him from destruction. He recognizes that the enemy could do nothing without God's permission. Whatever power they have is from God; therefore he prays: "Take from them Thy sword; render them powerless."

The Hebrew may be rendered: "*Arise, O Lord, go forth to meet him, cast him down; deliver my soul from the wicked with Thy sword.*"

Verse 14b.—The first part of this passage gives no meaning whatever. Many have tried to amend the text but without success. The second part seems to depict the prosperity that sinners frequently enjoy in this life. They possess an abundance of worldly goods; they are blessed with many children, and are enabled to leave them a goodly inheritance.

Verse 15.—These wicked ones place all their happiness in worldly goods and pleasures, which they have in abundance, but I envy them not. As for me, I purpose to so live that I may come before Thee in justice and enjoy true and perfect happiness in beholding Thy glory.

The Hebrew reads: "*As for me, in righteousness shall I behold Thy face; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness,*" i.e., when I awake from the sleep of death I shall behold Thy face, and be filled with Thy glory.

PSALMUS XVII

(HEB. XVIII)

- 1 In finem, puero Domini David, qui locutus est Domino verba cantici hujus, in die qua eripuit eum Dominus de manu omnium inimicorum ejus, et de manu Saul, et dixit: ¹
- 2 Diligam te, Domine, fortitudo mea.
- 3 Dominus firmamentum meum, et refugium meum, et liberator meus.
Deus meus adjutor meus, et sperabo in eum;
Protector meus, et cornu salutis meæ, et susceptor meus.
- 4 Laudans invocabo Dominum, et ab inimicis meis salvus ero.
- 5 Circumdederunt me dolores mortis, et torrentes iniquitatis conturbaverunt me.
- 6 Dolores inferni circumdederunt me, præoccupaverunt me laquei mortis.
- 7 In tribulatione mea invocavi Dominum, et ad Deum meum clamavi;

PSALM XVII

(HEB. XVIII)

- 1 Unto the end, for David the servant of the Lord, who spoke to the Lord the words of this canticle, in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hands of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.¹
- 2 I will love thee, O Lord, my strength:
- 3 The Lord is my firmament, my refuge, and my deliverer.
My God is my helper, and in him will I put my trust.
My protector and the horn of my salvation, and my support.
- 4 Praising I will call upon the Lord:
and I shall be saved from my enemies.
- 5 The sorrows of death surrounded me:
and the torrents of iniquity troubled me.
- 6 The sorrows of hell encompassed me:
and the snares of death prevented me.
- 7 In my affliction I called upon the Lord, and I cried to my God:

¹ Cf. 2 Kings xxii. 1.

Et exaudivit de templo
sancto suo vocem meam;
et clamor meus in conspectu
ejus introivit in aures ejus.

And he heard my voice from
his holy temple:
and my cry before him
came into his ears.

8 Commota est, et contremuit
terra;
fundamenta montium con-
turbata sunt,
et commota sunt, quoniam
iratus est eis.

8 The earth shook and trem-
bled:
the foundations of the moun-
tains were troubled
and were moved, because
he was angry with them.

9 Ascendit fumus in ira ejus,
et ignis a facie ejus
exarsit;
carbones succensi sunt ab
eo.

9 There went up a smoke in
his wrath: and a fire
flamed from his face:
coals were kindled by it.

10 Inclinavit cœlos, et descen-
dit;
et caligo sub pedibus ejus.

10 He bowed the heavens, and
came down:
and darkness was under his
feet.

11 Et ascendit super cherubim,
et volavit;
volavit super pennas ven-
torum.

11 And he ascended upon the
cherubim, and he flew;
he flew upon the wings of
the winds.

12 Et posuit tenebras latibulum
suum;
in circuitu ejus tabernacu-
lum ejus,
tenebrosa aqua in nubibus
aëris.

12 And he made darkness his
covert,
his pavilion round about
him:
dark waters in the clouds
of the air.

13 Præ fulgore in conspectu
ejus nubes transierunt,
grando et carbones ignis.

13 At the brightness that was
before him the clouds
passed,
hail and coals of fire.

14 Et intonuit de cœlo Domi-
nus,
et Altissimus dedit vocem
suam:
grando et carbones ignis.

14 And the Lord thundered
from heaven,
and the highest gave his
voice:
hail and coals of fire.

15 Et misit sagittas suas, et
dissipavit eos;
fulgura multiplicavit, et con-
turbavit eos.

15 And he sent forth his arrows,
and he scattered them:
he multiplied lightnings, and
troubled them.

16 Et apparuerunt fontes aqua-
rum,

16 Then the fountains of waters
appeared,

- et revelata sunt fundamenta orbis terrarum,
Ab increpatione tua, Domine, ab inspiratione spiritus iræ tuæ.
- 17 Misit de summo, et accepit me;
et assumpsit me de aquis multis.
- 18 Eripuit me de inimicis meis fortissimis,
et ab his qui oderunt me, quoniam confortati sunt super me.
- 19 Prævenērunt me in die afflictionis meæ;
et factus est Dominus protector meus.
- 20 Et eduxit me in latitudinem;
salvum me fecit, quoniam voluit me.
- 21 Et retribuet mihi Dominus secundum justitiam meam,
et secundum puritatem manuum mearum retribuet mihi;
- 22 Quia custodivi vias Domini,
nec impie gessi a Deo meo;
- 23 quoniam omnia judicia ejus in conspectu meo,
et justitias ejus non repuli a me.
- 24 Et ero immaculatus cum eo;
et observabo me ab iniquitate mea.
- 25 Et retribuet mihi Dominus secundum justitiam meam,
- and the foundations of the world were discovered:
At thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the spirit of thy wrath.
- 17 He sent from on high, and took me:
and received me out of many waters.
- 18 He delivered me from my strongest enemies,
and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me.
- 19 They prevented me in the day of my affliction:
and the Lord became my protector.
- 20 And he brought me forth into a large place:
he saved me, because he was well pleased with me.
- 21 And the Lord will reward me according to my justice;
and will repay me according to the cleanness of my hands:
- 22 Because I have kept the ways of the Lord;
and have not done wickedly against my God.
- 23 For all his judgments are in my sight:
and his justices I have not put away from me.
- 24 And I shall be spotless with him:
and shall keep myself from my iniquity.
- 25 And the Lord will reward me according to my justice;

- et secundum puritatem
menuum mearum in con-
spectu oculorum ejus.
- 26 Cum sancto sanctus eris,
et cum viro innocente inno-
cens eris,
27 Et cum electo electus eris;
et cum perverso perverteris.
- 28 Quoniam tu populum hu-
mitem salvum facies,
et oculos superbiorum hu-
miliabis.
- 29 Quoniam tu illuminas lu-
cernam meam, Domine;
Deus meus, illumina tene-
bras meas.
- 30 Quoniam in te eripiar a
tentatione;
et in Deo meo transgrediar
murum.
- 31 Deus meus, impolluta via
ejus;
eloquia Domini igne exam-
inata;
protector est omnium spe-
rantium in se.
- 32 Quoniam quis Deus præter
Dominum?
aut quis Deus præter Deum
nostrum?
- 33 Deus qui præcinxit me vir-
tute,
et posuit immaculatam viam
meam;
- 34 qui perfecit pedes meos
tamquam cervorum,
et super excelsa statuens me;
- 35 qui docet manus meas ad
proelium.
- and according to the clean-
ness of my hands before
his eyes.
- 26 With the holy, thou wilt
be holy;
and with the innocent man
thou wilt be innocent.
- 27 And with the elect thou
wilt be elect:
and with the perverse thou
wilt be perverted.
- 28 For thou wilt save the
humble people;
but wilt bring down the
eyes of the proud.
- 29 For thou lightest my lamp,
O Lord:
O my God enlighten my
darkness.
- 30 For by these I shall be de-
livered from temptation;
and through my God I shall
go over a wall.
- 31 As for God, his way is
undefiled:
the words of the Lord are
fire tried:
he is the protector of all
that trust in him.
- 32 For who is God but the
Lord?
or who is God but our God?
- 33 God who hath girt me with
strength;
and made my way blameless.
- 34 Who hath made my feet
like the feet of harts:
and who setteth me upon
high places.
- 35 Who teacheth my hands to
war:

- et posuisti, ut arcum æreum,
brachia mea;
- 36 Et dedisti mihi protectionem
salutis tuæ,
et dextera tua suscepit me;
et disciplina tua correxit
me in finem,
et disciplina tua ipsa me
docebit.
- 37 Dilatasti gressus meos sub-
tus me;
et non sunt infirmata ves-
tigia mea;
- 38 Persequar inimicos meos,
et comprehendam illos;
et non convertar donec
deficiant.
- 39 Confringam illos, nec po-
terunt stare;
cadent subtus pedes meos.
- 40 Et præcinxisti me virtute ad
bellum,
et supplantasti insurgentes
in me subtus me.
- 41 Et inimicos meos dedisti
mihi dorsum,
et odientes me disperdidisti.
- 42 Clamaverunt, nec erat qui
salvos faceret;
ad Dominum, nec exaudivit
eos.
- 43 Et comminuam eos ut pul-
verem ante faciem venti;
ut lutum platearum delebo
eos.
- and thou hast made my
arms like a brazen bow.
- 36 And thou hast given me the
protection of thy salva-
tion:
and thy right hand hath
held me up:
and thy discipline hath cor-
rected me unto the end:
and thy discipline, the same
shall teach me.
- 37 Thou hast enlarged my steps
under me;
and my feet are not weak-
ened.
- 38 I will pursue after my ene-
mies, and overtake them:
and I will not turn again
till they are consumed.
- 39 I will break them, and they
shall not be able to stand:
they shall fall under my
feet.
- 40 And thou hast girded me
with strength unto bat-
tle;
and hast subdued under me
them that rose up against
me.
- 41 And thou hast made my
enemies turn their back
upon me,
and hast destroyed them
that hated me.
- 42 They cried, but there was
none to save them,
to the Lord: but he heard
them not.
- 43 And I shall beat them as
small as the dust before
the wind:
I shall bring them to nought,
like the dirt in the streets.

- 44 Eripies me de contradic-
tionibus populi;
constitues me in caput
Gentium.
- 45 Populus, quem non cognovi,
servivit mihi;
in auditu auris obedivit
mihi.
- 46 Filii alieni mentiti sunt mihi,
filii alieni inveterati sunt,
et claudicaverunt a semitis
suis.
- 47 Vivit Dominus! et benedic-
tus Deus meus!
et exaltetur Deus salutis
meæ!
- 48 Deus qui das vindictas mihi,
et subdis populos sub me;
liberator meus de inimicis
meis iracundis.
- 49 Et ab insurgentibus in me
exaltabis me;
a viro iniquo eripies me.
- 50 Propterea confitebor tibi in
nationibus, Domine,
et nomini tuo psalmum
dicam;
- 51 Magnificans salutes regis
ejus,
et faciens misericordiam
christo suo David,
et semini ejus usque in
sæculum.
- 44 Thou wilt deliver me from
the contradictions of the
people:
thou wilt make me head of
the Gentiles.
- 45 A people, which I knew not,
hath served me:
at the hearing of the ear
they have obeyed me.
- 46 The children that are
strangers have lied to me,
strange children have faded
away,
and have halted from their
paths.
- 47 The Lord liveth, and blessed
be my God,
and let the God of my
salvation be exalted:
- 48 O God, who avengest me,
and subdest the people
under me,
my deliverer from my ene-
mies.
- 49 And thou wilt lift me up
above them that rise up
against me:
from the unjust man thou
wilt deliver me.
- 50 Therefore will I give glory
to thee, O Lord, among
the nations,
and I will sing a psalm to
thy name.
- 51 Giving great deliverance to
his king,
and shewing mercy to David
his anointed:
and to his seed forever.

PSALM XVII

THIS psalm is a song of triumph in thanksgiving for deliverance from enemies. It is found in *2 Kings* xxii, with the circumstances of its composition. These two texts of the psalm differ considerably, so much so, in fact, that they must be regarded as different versions. The differences are too great to be attributed to copyists' mistakes. It is probable that the text found in the Psalter is an adaptation of the original text made for liturgical purposes. This adaptation may be the work of David himself, or it may be the work of some collector of the Psalms.

Synopsis.—With affectionate love David praises God for deliverance (2-4) from the dangers that had threatened him (5-7). He represents God as coming in a storm (8-16) to deliver him and overthrow all his enemies (17-20). David's innocence is the motive for his deliverance (21-25), because God is wont to protect the just (26-30). Rightly, therefore, do they trust in Him (31, 32). The Psalmist enumerates the various helps that God granted him to overcome his enemies (33-46). The psalm ends with praise and thanksgiving (47-51).

Verses 2, 3.—Verse 2 is not found in *2 Kings*. The Hebrew word rendered "*love*" means a tender or affectionate love. The various epithets in these two verses reveal David's affectionate love and firm confidence in God.

As usual, the Septuagint avoids the figurative language of the Hebrew in reference to God. The Hebrew reads: "*God is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer. My God, my rock. I will take refuge in him. My shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high*

tower." These figures are probably a result of David's flight from Saul. The rocky cliffs and mountain caves were then his strongholds and his fortresses. The horn is an ancient figure of victorious and defiant power. David calls God the horn of his salvation because He interposed in his behalf and saved him from danger.

Verse 4.—David is already delivered from his enemies. It seems better, therefore, to construe this verse in the past tense, thus: "Praising the Lord, I called upon Him and was saved from my enemies." The future tense may be explained as follows: "Whenever enemies shall threaten me, I will call upon the Lord as I have done in the past, and I know that He will save me."

The Hebrew reads: "*I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised, and so shall I be saved from my enemies.*"

Verses 5, 6.—In few words David graphically describes the dangers threatening him, as snares hidden to entrap him, and as a rushing torrent that sweeps everything down to destruction. "The sorrows or pangs of death surrounded me on every side, and the torrents of iniquity rushed upon me and overwhelmed me. The snares of death rushed upon me unexpectedly." Hell (*sheol*) is used in the sense of death, so that "*sorrows of hell*" and "*sorrows of death*" are synonymous.

The Hebrew reads: "*The cords of death have enclosed me: And the torrents of Belial¹ have af-frighted me. The cords of sheol were round about me: the snares of death rushed upon me.*"

Verse 7.—"In my distress I turned to God for

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 15.

assistance; from heaven (His holy temple) He heard my prayers; my cry of distress that went up in His presence found a hearing."

Verse 8.—David's deliverance, effected by divine intervention, is poetically described as a visible manifestation of God,

" Whose hand the lightning forms,
Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms." ¹

The figure is founded on facts, because God actually appeared in this manner when He delivered the Israelites from the hand of Pharaoh, and when He gave the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. The power of God's wrath is fittingly represented by the warring of the elements and the earthquake. The earth trembled in fear, and the rock-ribbed mountains shook to their very foundations because God was coming in His anger against all wickedness.

Verse 9.—God burned with anger against the enemies of David. " He breathed hard and rapidly and His breath like a smoke went up in His nostrils and so hot was it that it appeared like a flame of fire from His mouth and like a flame it devoured whatever came in its way." ²

The Hebrew reads: "*A smoke went up from His nostrils, and a devouring flame out of His mouth: coals were kindled by it.*"

Verses 10–16 describe the theophany. God is coming in the storm. Dense clouds sweep over the sky and it appears that the very heavens are bending down to earth. God is hidden in the darkness of these clouds (10). He mounts His chariot and rides upon the winds of the storm (11). He is concealed

¹ Pope.

² Briggs.

in the darkness, black clouds are under His feet. Torrents of rain begin to fall (12), followed by hail and lightning (13). Thunders, peal upon peal, roll through the heavens, followed by fresh downpours of hail and flashes of lightning (14). Out of the darkness of the storm God sends forth His arrows—the lightnings—and scatters the enemies of David: then hurling His thunderbolts He strikes them down (15). At the threatening of God, at the blast of His breath (the winds) the channels of water were laid bare (16), and God reached down and drew David from the waters (dangers) that surrounded him (17). This is an evident allusion to the parting of the waters to allow the children of Israel to pass through the Red Sea.

Verses 10, 11.—Some understand the cherubim to be the winds of the storm, but it is more probable that the figure is taken from the Ark of the Covenant where God was said to sit enthroned upon the cherubim. (Cf. *2 Kings* vi. 2; *Ex.* xxv. 22; *Num.* vii. 89; *Ezech.* i; *Is.* vi. 1–3.)

Verse 12.—As the winds arose, the dense black clouds rolling up increased the darkness of the storm. God, as it were, surrounded Himself with these clouds and made them His hiding-place—His tabernacle.

The Hebrew reads: “*He made darkness His covering, His pavilion round about Him darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.*” In *2 Kings* the Vulgate reads: “*He made darkness a covering round about Him: dropping waters out of the clouds of the heavens.*”

Verse 13.—This verse seems to mean that the clouds separated before the brightness of God’s countenance and allowed the lightning and the hail to pass through. The text of *2 Kings* gives a more

intelligible reading by omitting the mention of clouds and hail: "*By the brightness before him, the coals of fire were kindled,*" i.e., the lightnings (coals of fire) were kindled by the brightness of God's countenance.

Verse 14.—The Psalmist represents the thunders as the voice of God.¹ "*Hail and coals of fire*" is not found in this verse in *2 Kings*.

Verse 15.—God shot forth His arrows—the lightnings—and scattered the enemies of David; He showered down His arrows upon the enemies and destroyed them.

Verse 16.—The word rendered "*fountains*" means rather the channels of the streams, the river beds. At the rebuke of God, at the breath of His anger (the winds), the waters were dried up, or separated, as when the Israelites passed through the sea.

Verses 17, 18.—God reached out His hand from above and drew David up out of the deep waters of trouble and affliction in which he was about to perish. God snatched him from the hand of all his enemies because they were too powerful for him; he could not escape without divine assistance. The Hebrew "*mashah*," here translated "*received*," is found only in this passage and in *Ex. ii. 10*, where it is given as the root from which the name Moses was derived. She "*called his name Moses, saying: Because I took (mashah) him out of the water.*" Hence David says: "The Lord made a Moses of me. I was delivered from the deep waters of affliction, as Moses was saved from the waters of the Nile."

Verses 19, 20.—"In the day of trouble the enemy came upon me unexpectedly, but the Lord was my

¹ Cf. Ps. xxviii. 3.

stay. He delivered me from my straits; He saved me from the enemy because He loved me; because I was pleasing to Him."

Verses 21-25.—These verses show us why God was well pleased with David. "The Lord delivered me as a reward for my righteousness and for the uprightness of all my works (21). I have kept the ways of the Lord; I have not done wickedly against Him"; or better, "I have not sinfully strayed from Him (22). I have kept His precepts ever before my eyes; I have not neglected His commandments (23). I was upright in His sight and was careful to keep myself from sin (24). Therefore God rewarded me for my uprightness and for the purity of my hands" (25).

Verses 26, 27.—David's justice was rewarded because God gives to every one according to his works. To the merciful (holy) He shows mercy; with the sincere (innocent) He deals openly and sincerely; with the pure (elect) He is benign and merciful; but with the perverse He deals severely and without mercy. The perverse He delivers over to their own perverseness,¹ and catches the wise in their own craftiness.² "*If you will walk contrary to Me, says the Lord, I also will walk contrary to thee.*"³

Verse 28.—This verse further insists upon God's justice in dealing with men. He defends and delivers those who are unjustly afflicted, but the proud will He humble.⁴

Verses 29, 30.—" 'Tis Thou, O Lord, who lightest my lamp, and enlighteneth my darkness." To extinguish the lamp means to punish. "*Shall not*

¹ Rom. i. 28.

² Levit. xxvi. 28.

³ Job v. 13.

⁴ Prov. vi. 17; Is. ii. 11.

*the light of the wicked be extinguished?"*¹ "*How often shall the lamp of the wicked be put out and a deluge come upon them?"*² To light the lamp means to favor and protect. "*But the Lord would not destroy Juda, for David His servant's sake, as He had promised him, to give him a light.*"³

"Thou lightest my lamp," i.e., "Thou deliverest me from my enemies. By Thee am I snatched from the dangers (temptation) that surround me. By Thee am I strengthened to scale the walls of the enemy. By Thee do I overcome all obstacles."

In 2 *Kings* this verse reads: "*For in Thee will I run girded: in my God I will leap over the wall.*" The Hebrew reads: "*For by Thee do I scatter a troop, and by my God do I leap walls.*"

Verses 31, 32.—God's dealings with man are always just, holy, and merciful; His words are sincere; His promises never-failing. Hence He is the protector (Hebrew, "*shield*") of all that trust in Him. He alone is our protector and our hope; He alone is God. In Hebrew: "*And who is a rock besides our God?"* In verses 33–46 David enumerates the favors that God showered upon him for the conflict with his enemies. He thus confirms the words of verse 32. "Who is God but our God? He girded me with strength for the fray, and made my way easy and secure (33). He gave me the fleetness of the deer to pursue the enemy; He granted me the high and impregnable positions (34). He taught my hand to war, and strengthened my arms like brazen bows (35). He protected me, and His right hand upheld me. He continually admonished and instructed me

¹ Job. xviii. 5.

² Job xxi. 17.

³ 4 *Kings* viii. 19.

(36). He gave me a sure foothold and made me to stand firm (37). I pursued the enemy and overtook them, and desisted not until they were completely destroyed (38). I smote them down and they were unable to rise again; they fell beneath my feet (39). God girded me with strength for the battle and subdued all that rose up against me (40). He routed my enemies, and destroyed them (41). They cried out for help but there was no one to save; they called upon the Lord but He answered them not (42). I beat them fine as dust and I treated them with contempt as if they were but dirt in the streets (43). The Lord delivered me from the seditions of my people and subjected Gentile nations to me (44). They submitted even at the rumors of my victories (45), but it was only a feigned submission, for inwardly they opposed me, but their opposition availed them not (46).

Verse 33.—“*Made my way blameless*” (2 Kings “*perfect*”) i.e., without obstructions, easy, secure. There is no question of grace to lead a righteous life, but of assistance in wars.

Verse 36.—In 2 Kings this verse reads: “*Thou hast given me the shield of my salvation, and Thy mildness hath multiplied me,*” i.e., “by Thy goodness Thou hast made me great”; or, “Thou hast made me to triumph over my enemies.”

“*Unto the end*” is wanting in Hebrew and in the Vulgate text of 2 Kings. “*Thy discipline hath corrected me*” and “*Thy discipline, the same shall teach me*” are simply different renderings of the Hebrew text. The second phrase is merely a gloss that has found its way into the text.

Verses 37–39.—The past tense should be used in

these verses because David is describing victories already won.

Verses 40-43.—Verse 40 should be in the past tense instead of the future. *2 Kings* reads “*dust of the earth.*” This agrees with the context better than “*dust before the wind.*”

In *2 Kings* the latter part of verse 43 reads: “*I shall crush them and spread them abroad like the mire of the streets.*” In Hebrew: “*Like the mud of the streets did I empty them out.*” Contemptuous treatment or ignominious defeat is the general idea underlying these different readings. Cf. *Micheas* vii. 10.

Verse 44.—*2 Kings* reads: “*from the contradictions of my people.*” This shows that the reference is to internal troubles—seditions and rebellions, perhaps the rebellion of Absalom or the troubles incident to David’s accession to the throne.

Several heathen nations around Judea were made subject to David; hence he was made head of the Gentiles. The past tense should be used instead of the future.

Verses 45, 46.—“A foreign, Gentile nation yielded to me as soon as they heard of my victorious career. They yielded through fear and their submission was only feigned (*lied to me*). They planned to resist but their national strength was paralyzed, their plans of resistance (paths) had to be abandoned, they yielded with shame (limped out).”¹ The Hebrew word rendered “*paths*” may also mean “*fortresses*”—“They shall go out trembling from their fortresses and give them up to me.”

The text of *2 Kings* gives an easier reading: “*The*

¹ M'Swiney,

sons of the stranger will resist me, at the hearing of the ear they will obey me."

Verse 47.—“*The Lord liveth*” should be expressed as a wish or exclamation to correspond to the rest of the verse. “Long live Yahveh! Blessed be my God! Exalted be the God of my victories!”

Verses 48, 49.—In these verses David sums up in a few words his motives for praising and thanking God. “Blessed be my God who avengeth me of all my enemies and delivereth me from their power. Blessed be God who subdueth hostile nations and delivereth me from the unjust man.” The “*unjust man*” may be a singular used in a collective sense, or it may refer to Saul, David’s arch-enemy.

Verse 50.—“I will praise and glorify Thee among the Gentiles. The knowledge of Thy great mercies toward me, Thy anointed, and toward Thy chosen people shall not be confined to the narrow limits of Israel.” Knabenbauer explains it thus: Popular opinion ascribed victory to the mighty god of the victor overcoming the weaker god of the conquered. Hence the signal victories of David over the surrounding nations redounded to the honor and glory of the true God; and when David published abroad his victories he likewise proclaims the glory of God.

In a typical sense these words refer to Christ who gave praise to God through Gentile nations converted to the Faith. “*But that the Gentiles are to glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: Therefore will I confess to Thee, O Lord.*”¹

Verse 51.—God gives (or gave) wonderful deliverance and glorious victories to David, the anointed king over Israel. This mercy was not for David

¹ Rom. xv. 9,

alone, but for his house for ever, as God had promised.
“ *But My mercy I will not take away from him, as I took it away from Saul whom I removed from before My face.*” ¹

In liturgical usage this verse seems to have been a chorus.

¹ 2 Kings vii. 15 et seq.

PSALMUS XVIII

(HEB. XIX)

- 1 In finem, Psalmus David.
- 2 Cœli enarrant gloriam Dei,
et opera manuum ejus annuntiat firmamentum.
- 3 Dies diei eructat verbum,
et nox nocti indicat scientiam.
- 4 Non sunt loquelæ, neque sermones, quorum non audiantur voces eorum.
- 5 In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum,
et in fines orbis terræ verba eorum.
- 6 In sole posuit tabernaculum suum;
et ipse tamquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo.
Exultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam;
- 7 a summo cœlo egressio ejus.
Et occursus ejus usque ad summum ejus;
Nec est qui se abscondat a calore ejus.
- s Lex Domini immaculata,
convertens animas;

PSALM XVIII

(HEB. XIX)

- 1 Unto the end. A psalm for David.
- 2 The heavens shew forth the glory of God,
and the firmament declareth the work of his hands.
- 3 Day to day uttereth speech,
and night to night sheweth knowledge.
- 4 There are no speeches nor languages, where their voices are not heard.
- 5 Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth:
and their words unto the ends of the world.
- 6 He hath set his tabernacle in the sun:
and he, as a bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber,
Hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way:
- 7 His going out is from the end of heaven,
And his circuit even to the end thereof:
and there is no one that can hide himself from his heat.
- s The law of the Lord is unspotted, converting souls:

- testimonium Domini fidele,
sapientiam præstans par-
vulis.
- 9 Justitiæ Domini rectæ, læti-
ficantes corda;
præceptum Domini lucidum,
illuminans oculos.
- 10 Timor Domini sanctus, per-
manens in sæculum sæ-
culi;
judicia Domini vera, jus-
tificata in semetipsa.
- 11 Desiderabilia super aurum
et lapidem pretiosum
multum;
et dulciora super mel et
favum.
- 12 Etenim servus tuus cus-
todit ea;
in custodiendis illis retri-
butio multa.
- 13 Delicta quis intelligit?
ab occultis meis munda me,
- 14 et ab alienis parce servo tuo.
- Si mei non fuerint dominati,
tunc immaculatus ero,
- et mundabor a delicto maxi-
mo.
- 15 Et erunt ut complacent
eloquia oris mei:
- et meditatio cordis mei in
conspectu tuo semper.
Domine, adjutor meus, et
redemptor meus.
- the testimony of the Lord
is faithful, giving wisdom
to little ones.
- 9 The justices of the Lord are
right, rejoicing hearts:
the commandment of the
Lord is lightsome, en-
lightening the eyes.
- 10 The fear of the Lord is holy,
enduring for ever and
ever:
the judgments of the Lord
are true, justified in them-
selves.
- 11 More to be desired than
gold and many precious
stones:
and sweeter than honey and
the honeycomb.
- 12 For thy servant keepeth
them,
and in keeping them there
is a great reward.
- 13 Who can understand sins?
from my secret ones cleanse
me, O Lord:
- 14 and from those of others
spare thy servant.
If they shall have no do-
minion over me, then shall
I be without spot:
and I shall be cleansed from
the greatest sin.
- 15 And the words of my mouth
shall be such as may
please:
and the meditation of my
heart always in thy sight.
O Lord, my helper, and
my redeemer.

PSALM XVIII

OUR knowledge of God is derived from two sources; the one natural, the other supernatural. The one is a manifestation of God in the works of His hands, the other is the voice of God speaking in revelation. These two sources are worthy of admiration and wonderfully adapted to show forth the glory of God.

Synopsis.—The glory of God is revealed by the beauties of heaven (2-5); especially by the sun which illuminates, vivifies, and fructifies the earth (6, 7). In like manner the Law (revelation) reveals the will of God and enlightens, vivifies, and fructifies the soul (8-10). The Law is to be held in great reverence and faithfully observed (11, 12). The Psalmist implores forgiveness of all transgressions unwittingly committed against the Law (13-15).

Some interpreters believe that this psalm is composed of two separate poems (1-7 and 8-15), but there is a relationship between the two parts which unites them into one beautiful whole. In the first part we see the glory of God the Creator revealed by the works of His hands. In this part God is called "*El*"—"Almighty." In the second part God is revealed as the lawgiver, and is mentioned by His covenant name, "Yahveh."

Verse 2.—The beautiful expanse of heaven with its starry hosts by night, and its dazzling splendors by day, proclaims the glory and majesty of God above all His other material creatures.

Verse 3.—"This verse shows a ceaseless round of praise. By day the splendors of the sun, by night the beauty of the stars, proclaim the glory of God.

The days and nights pass by in a never-ending succession. By a beautiful artifice of the poet, each day is represented as singing the praises of God, only to pass away and leave this glorious task to the next succeeding day. In like manner each night glorifies God after its own manner and, passing away, leaves the succeeding night to continue this eternal hymn of praise.”¹

The Hebrew word rendered “*eructat—uttereth*,” literally means “to well up” or bubble over like a fountain.

Verse 4.—The voice of the heavens proclaiming the glory of God is known to all and understood by all, “*for the invisible things of God . . . are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.*”²

This seems to be the meaning of the Septuagint and Vulgate. The Hebrew text is variously translated by the different interpreters. Some render it: “There is no speech, there are no words, their voice is inaudible”; i.e., the heavens are silent yet eloquent witnesses of the divine majesty. This does not agree with the context, since speech was attributed to the heavens, and to the days and nights. The most probable meaning is that the voice of the heavens is not obscure and inaudible but heard everywhere to the uttermost bounds of the earth. This agrees well with the following verse and with the Vulgate, which may be rendered: “They are not speeches nor languages of which the voices are not heard.”

Verse 5.—The heavens are telling the glory of God and their voices are heard even to the uttermost parts of the world.

¹ Card. Bellarmine.

² Rom. i. 20.

The present Hebrew text reads: "*Their line hath gone forth into all the earth.*" This reading gives no meaning and destroys the parallelism with the next line. "*Kavam*" (their line) of the present Hebrew text should be "*kolam*" (their voices). St. Paul applies this verse to the preaching of the apostles.¹

Verse 6.—According to the Septuagint and Vulgate God is represented as dwelling in the sun. The heavens are the palace of the King of kings, and the sun, the most resplendent of the heavenly bodies, is his royal pavilion.

The Hebrew reads: "*In them hath He set a tent for the sun,*" i.e., "God placed the sun in the midst of the heavenly bodies." This reading, supported by nearly all versions, gives a better meaning and agrees better with what follows.

The sun arising in all his glory appears like a bridegroom coming forth from his bridal chamber radiant with joy and clad in his most gorgeous array. Like an athlete he is ready to run his course and is impatient for the start.

Verse 7.—The beginning of the sun's daily course is in the east, the extremity of the earth, and his path leads across the heavens even to the west, the other extremity of the earth. There is nothing upon earth that does not feel the beneficent influence of the sun in its daily course through the heavens.

It has been declared an article of faith that God can be known by the light of natural reason alone, by means of the things that were made. Not only the heavens proclaim the glory of God; even the most insignificant creature shows the guiding hand of Omnipotence.

¹ Rom. x. 18.

*" But ask now the beasts and they shall teach thee:
 And the birds of the air, and they shall tell.
 Speak to the earth, and it shall answer thee:
 And the fishes of the sea shall tell . . .
 That the hand of the Lord hath made all these
 things."*¹

Verses 8-10.—The Psalmist passes abruptly to the second part of the psalm. The name of God is written gloriously in the heavens, but it is still more glorious in the book of the Law. From the heavens we hear the voice of God's creatures proclaiming His existence and His majesty. In the Law we hear the voice of God Himself revealing His will, His mercy, and His goodness. "*Torah* does not in itself mean the law, but a pointing out, instruction, doctrine, or teaching, and more particularly such as is divine, and therefore positive; hence it is also used of prophecy and prophetically of the New Testament Gospel. But here no other divine revelation is meant than that given by the mediation of Moses which is become the law of Israel."²

In these verses the law is referred to by six different terms, each with an adjective giving some quality and a phrase describing its effects upon those who accept it.

(1) The law is spotless, perfect, adapted to man's needs and gives newness of life to the soul.

The Hebrew word "*tameem*"—unspotted—is also used in reference to the victims of sacrifice which were free from all defects.

The word rendered "*converting*," means to refresh or give newness of life.

¹ Job xii. 7 et seq.

² Delitzsch.

(2) The testimony of the Lord is sure and faithful. Its declarations are free from all doubt, and the promises of reward and punishment will be faithfully carried out. It gives true wisdom to the humble, to those who are open to the truth. The testimony may refer to the two tables of the Decalogue which are called the tables of the testimony.¹

(3) The precepts of the Lord teach and inculcate what is just and prohibit what is unjust, thus leading the soul in the way of righteousness and giving true joy to the heart.

(4) The commandment of the Lord is bright, pure, holy, i.e., tending only to the moral well-being of man. Therefore it enlightens the eyes to know the divine will in all things.

The law is to the spiritual world as the sun is to the physical. As the sun enlightens and vivifies all nature, so the law enlightens and vivifies the soul.

(5) The fear or worship of God as prescribed by the law is pure and holy and shall endure for ever. The worship of God is thus opposed to the lewd rites of heathen worship which shall be supplanted by the worship of the one true God.

(6) The judgments—decrees and statutes—of God are true, or, as in Hebrew, they are truth, and therefore just.

Verse 11.—Because of the excellence of the law it is more desirable than gold and precious stones (Hebrew, "*and most pure gold*"), and sweeter than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. This comparison expresses the chief qualities of the law—its intrinsic worth and its beneficent effects in re-

¹ Ex. xxxii. 15.

freshing souls and rejoicing hearts. "*My yoke is sweet and My burden light.*"¹

Verse 12.—"Therefore I who am Thy servant observe Thy precepts" (Hebr. "*I am admonished or instructed by them*") "and through Thy mercy a great reward is to be found in their observance."

Verse 13.—"I endeavor to observe Thy law perfectly, but who can know what transgressions he may have committed unawares? Therefore I beseech Thee, O Lord, cleanse me from sins that I know not of. Cleanse me from all sins of ignorance and human frailty."

Verse 14.—According to the Vulgate, David prays that he be preserved or kept from strangers so that he may not come under their powerful and corrupting influence. Perhaps this refers to Israelites estranged from God and become idolaters. If the Psalmist comes not under their influence, nor be led into their evil ways, he shall be free from a great sin. The Douay Version gives a wrong translation of the Vulgate "*from those of others* (i.e., from the sins of others) *spare Thy servant.*"

The Hebrew text gives a reading which is more intelligible and suits the context much better: "*Also from presumptuous sins keep Thy servant back that they may not have dominion over me.*" The Psalmist asks to be preserved from deliberate sins that he may not become the slave of sin and sinful habits. "*Then shall I be guiltless and clean from great transgression,*" i.e., "when my sins of ignorance and human frailty have been forgiven, and I am preserved from deliberate sins, then shall I be guiltless

¹ Matt. xi. 30.

and clean from great sin that I might otherwise commit."

Verse 15.—"When I am freed from all my sins my prayers (the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart) will be pleasing to Thee, O Lord, who art my helper and my deliverer."

The Hebrew makes this verse an independent sentence in which the Psalmist prays that he may be pleasing in the sight of God. "*May the words of my mouth be acceptable, and the meditation of my heart before Thee, O Lord, my rock and my deliverer.*"

PSALMUS XIX

(HEB. XX)

- 1 In finem, Psalmus David.
- 2 Exaudiat te Dominus in die tribulationis;
protegat te nomen Dei Jacob.
- 3 Mittat tibi auxilium de sancto,
et de Sion tueatur te.
- 4 Memor sit omnis sacrificii tui,
et holocaustum tuum pingue fiat. Selah.
- 5 Tribuat tibi secundum cor tuum,
et omne consilium tuum confirmet.
- 6 Lætabimur in salutari tuo;
et in nomine Dei nostri magnificabimur.
- 7 Impleat Dominus omnes petitiones tuas,
nunc cognovi quoniam salvum fecit Dominus christum suum.
Exaudiet illum de cælo sancto suo;
in potentatibus salus dexteræ ejus.
- 8 Hi in curribus, et hi in equis;
nos autem in nomine Domini Dei nostri invocabimus.

PSALM XIX

(HEB. XX)

- 1 Unto the end. A psalm for David.
- 2 May the Lord hear thee in the day of tribulation:
may the name of the God of Jacob protect thee.
- 3 May he send thee help from the sanctuary:
and defend thee out of Sion.
- 4 May he be mindful of all thy sacrifices:
and may thy whole burnt offering be made fat. Selah.
- 5 May he give thee according to thy own heart;
and confirm all thy counsels.
- 6 We will rejoice in thy salvation;
and in the name of our God we shall be exalted.
- 7 The Lord fulfil all thy petitions:
now have I known that the Lord hath saved his anointed.
He will hear him from his holy heaven:
the salvation of his right hand is in powers.
- 8 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses:
but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>9 Ipsi obligati sunt, et ceciderunt;
 nos autem surreximus, et erecti sumus.</p> <p>10 Domine, saluum fac regem, et exaudi nos in die qua invocaverimus te.</p> | <p>9 They are bound, and have fallen;
 but we are risen, and are set upright.</p> <p>10 O Lord, save the king: and hear us in the day that we shall call upon thee.</p> |
|--|---|

PSALM XIX

THIS psalm is a prayer before battle. When about to set out for war, David had sacrifices offered up to implore God's aid, and it seems that this psalm was written for the occasion.

It is not known which of David's many wars gave occasion for the psalm. The Syriac Version has as title, "To David when he prayed to be delivered from the Ammonite war." The events of this war as related in 2 *Kings* x. 6 et seq. agree well with this psalm.

Synopsis.—God is implored to give assistance to David in the impending battle (2–6). Firm hope is entertained because confidence has been placed in God alone (7–10). The psalm seems to have been intended for responsive singing. Verses 2–7a and 8, 9 were probably sung by the people or by a choir of Levites; verse 7b a solo, and verse 10 a chorus by the people.

Verses 2, 3.—"*Day of tribulation*" indicates a time of great danger. "The nation was in straits and in peril, and victory doubtful so far as their own ability to repel the invaders was concerned; their only hope was in divine assistance."¹

The people pray: "May God hear thee, may our God, the God of Israel (Jacob) protect thee" (Hebr.

¹ Briggs.

“*set thee on high*,” i.e., out of danger); “may He send thee help from His dwelling on Sion.”

The Tabernacle with the Ark of the Covenant was then on Mount Sion.

Verse 4.—May the sacrifices now offered up for thee be acceptable and pleasing to God.

“*To be mindful of*” means to look upon with favor, to accept. The sacrifice here mentioned is the offering of grain, meal, oil, or wine, which was sometimes offered as a separate sacrifice, but more frequently in connection with burnt offerings.

The holocaust was a burnt offering in which the whole victim was consumed on the altar of holocausts. The fat of animals was considered the choicest part, and in many offerings only the fat was burned upon the altar; hence the expression “*let thy burnt offerings be made fat*” means, “let it be acceptable and pleasing to God.”

Verse 5.—“May God give thee victory—the wish of thy heart—and prosper all your plans.”

Verse 6.—“We will rejoice and glory in thy victory”; or better, perhaps, “May we rejoice and glory in thy victory. May victory be thine!”

The Hebrew reads: “*We will shout for joy because of thy deliverance. And in the name of our God we will raise our banners. The Lord fulfil all thy petitions.*”

The meaning is the same. There is a wish or purpose to celebrate a joyful triumph in honor of victory over their enemies.

Verse 7a.—This phrase properly belongs to verse 6 as in the Hebrew. The words are still addressed to David, “*thy petitions.*” The next phrase begins a passage in which the first person singular is used.

This indicates that it was to be sung by a single voice, perhaps by a priest or a Levite.

Verse 7b.—“While verses 2-6 were being sung the offering of the sacrifice was probably going on. Now, after a lengthened pause, there ascends a voice, probably the voice of one of the Levites, expressing the cheering assurance of the gracious acceptance of the offering that has been presented by the priest.”¹ “Now I am confident that God will save His anointed king. From His throne in heaven God will answer his prayers for deliverance and victory. He shall be saved by the mighty deeds of God’s right hand. Thy right hand, O Lord, is magnified in strength; thy right hand, O Lord, hath slain the enemy” (Cf. *Ex.* xv. 6).

Verse 8.—The first person plural reappearing in this and the following verses indicates that they were to be sung by all the people, or by a choir of priests or Levites: “Some boast of their chariots of war and measure their strength by the number they possess. Others glory in their many fine horses; but we place all our trust in God. We call upon Him for protection. In His name we go forth to battle, confident of victory.” Horses and chariots were the chief reliance of the enemies of Israel. Cf. *2 Kings* x. 18; *Paral.* xix. 6, 7. Israel was forbidden to keep a standing army, and the Law speaks strongly against the king’s keeping many horses. “*And when he is made king, he shall not multiply horses to himself*” (*Deut.* xvii. 16). Solomon was the first to acquire a great number of horses and chariots (*3 Kings* x. 26-29).

Verse 9.—“They that trust in horses and chariots

¹ Delitzsch.

will be entangled and brought down in defeat; but we who trust in God shall stand firm and unconquered."

M'Swiney notes that "*obligati*" may be a copyist's mistake for "*obliquati*"—turned aside, routed.

The future is more appropriate in this verse because the reference is to a victory yet to be won. We may retain the past tense as an expression of complete confidence in the final outcome.

Verse 10.—This verse is well suited as a chorus for the people.

The present Hebrew text reads: "*Save, Lord; let the King hear us when we call.*" The reading of the Vulgate is preferred by most authors because "*king*" by itself is never used in reference to God.

PSALMUS XX

(HEB. XXI)

- 1 In finem, Psalmus David.
- 2 Domine, in virtute tua læta-
bitur rex:
et super salutare tuum ex-
ultabit vehementer.
- 3 Desiderium cordis ejus trib-
uisti ei,
et voluntate labiorum ejus
non fraudasti eum. Selah.
- 4 Quoniam prævenisti eum
in benedictionibus dul-
cedinis:
posuisti in capite ejus
coronam de lapide pre-
tioso.
- 5 Vitam petiisti a te, et trib-
uisti ei
longitudinem dierum in
sæculum, et in sæculum
sæculi.
- 6 Magna est gloria ejus in
salutari tuo;
gloriam et magnum deco-
rem impones super eum.
- 7 Quoniam dabis eum in ben-
edictionem in sæculum
sæculi;
lætificabis eum in gaudio
cum vultu tuo.
- 8 Quoniam rex sperat in Dom-
ino;

PSALM XX

(HEB. XXI)

- 1 Unto the end. A psalm for
David.
- 2 In thy strength, O Lord, the
king shall joy;
and in thy salvation he
shall rejoice exceedingly.
- 3 Thou hast given him his
heart's desire:
and hast not withholden
from him the will of his
lips. Selah.
- 4 For thou hast prevented
him with blessings of
sweetness:
thou hast set on his head a
crown of precious stones.
- 5 He asked life of thee: and
thou hast given him
length of days for ever and
ever.
- 6 His glory is great in thy sal-
vation:
glory and great beauty shalt
thou lay upon him.
- 7 For thou shalt give him to
be a blessing for ever and
ever:
thou shalt make him joyful
in gladness with thy coun-
tenance.

- 8 For the king hopeth in the
Lord:

et in misericordia Altissimi
non commovebitur.

and through the mercy of
the Most High he shall
not be moved.

9 Inveniat manus tua om-
nibus inimicis tuis;
dextera tua inveniat omnes
qui te oderunt.

10 Pones eos ut clibanum ignis
in tempore vultus tui;

Dominus in ira sua con-
turbabit eos,
et devorabit eos ignis.

11 Fructum eorum de terra
perdes,
et semen eorum a filiis
hominum,

12 quoniam declinaverunt in
te mala:
cogitaverunt consilia quæ
non potuerunt stabilire.

13 Quoniam pones eos dorsum;
in reliquiis tuis præparabis
vultum eorum.

14 Exaltare, Domine, in vir-
tute tua;
cantabimus et psallemus
virtutes tuas.

9 Let thy hand be found by
all thy enemies:
let thy right hand find out
all them that hate thee.

10 Thou shalt make them as
an oven of fire, in the
time of thy anger;
the Lord shall trouble them
in his wrath,
and fire shall devour them.

11 Their fruit shalt thou des-
troy from the earth:
and their seed from among
the children of men.

12 For they have intended evils
against thee:
they have devised counsels
which they have not been
able to establish.

13 For thou shalt make them
turn their back:
in thy remnants thou shalt
prepare their face.

14 Be thou exalted, O Lord,
in thy own strength:
we will sing and praise thy
power.

PSALM XX

THIS psalm is usually considered a hymn of thanksgiving for some signal victory. A comparison of it (2-4) with Psalm xix (5-7) indicates that both refer to the same event. Briggs calls the one "a Litany before the battle"; the other "a Te Deum for the victory."

Synopsis.—The first part of the psalm, addressed to God, is a thanksgiving for victory with an enu-

meration of the various favors bestowed upon the king (2-7). The second part, addressed to David, expresses an earnest hope that all the enemies of the king and his people may ever suffer defeat and disaster (9-13). The psalm closes with a chorus (14). Van Steenkiste thinks that verses 2-7 and 8-13 were sung as solos; verses 8 and 14 as choruses.

Verse 2.—David greatly rejoices at the powerful assistance (strength) and the signal victory (salvation) that God has granted him. The present tense is required in this verse because the victory has been won and David is now rejoicing and giving thanks.

Verse 3.—God has granted David all his prayers. He has given the desired aid, and the victory is won. Cf. *Ps.* xix. 5-7.

Verse 4.—Thou hast come out to meet him with Thy choicest blessings. God promptly aided David, as it were, coming out to meet him.

“*A crown of precious stones,*” i.e., a crown studded with precious stones, or, according to the Hebrew, “*a crown of most pure gold.*” Some interpret this figuratively as referring to the victory which David obtained over his enemies. Others think it an allusion to the incident narrated in *2 Kings* xii. 30. After David had taken the Ammonite city Rabbath “*he took the crown of their king from his head, the weight of which was a talent of gold, set with most precious stones, and it was put upon David's head.*” Others see in this passage a reference to the great honor and dignity God conferred upon David when He made him king over the chosen people.

Verse 5.—“He begged Thee for a long and happy life, or, a long and prosperous reign, and Thou didst grant his request. Thou gavest him length of days

for ever." This is a figurative way of expressing a long time, especially when wishing long life to the king: "*May my lord David live for ever*" (3 Kings i. 31); "*O king, live for ever*" (Dan. iii. 9).

Verse 6.—"The victory which Thou gavest the king has conferred great glory and majesty upon his name."

Verse 7.—"Thou hast made him the object of life-long blessings; Thou wilt even bless him for ever in his prosperity." Or, "Thou hast so blessed and favored him that he shall be an example for all future generations and they can say to one another: May God bless thee as He blessed David the king." Cf. Gen. xlviii. 20. "*In thee shall Israel be blessed, and it shall be said: God do to thee as to Ephraim, and as to Manasses.*" "Thou makest him joyful with thy countenance; Thou makest him to rejoice exceedingly because of Thy great favors and blessings."

Verse 8.—The king places all his hope in God; therefore he shall be ever successful; no troubles nor wars shall ever disturb the success of his reign.

Verse 9.—This verse begins the second part of the psalm in which the people address the king with hope of a complete overthrow of all their enemies. "May all thy enemies feel the power of thy avenging hand!"

Verse 10.—"In the time of thy anger, when thou givest battle to thy enemies, thou wilt give them over to complete destruction. They shall be destroyed like the contents of a fiery furnace." This phrase may also have reference to a fate like that meted out to the Ammonites after their defeat. "*And bringing forth the people thereof (Rabbath) he sawed them, and drove over them chariots armed with iron; and divided them with knives, and made them pass through brick-*

kilns; so did he (David) to all the cities of the children of Ammon " (2 Kings xii. 31).

The enemies of David as king of the chosen people were also the enemies of God, and the anger of God shall devour them as a consuming fire.

Verse 11.—Not only the enemies of David shall be destroyed, but even their offspring (their fruit and their seed) shall be wiped from the face of the earth, as was the custom in ancient warfare. "*And they took the city and killed all that were in it, man and woman, young and old. The oxen also and the sheep, and the asses, they slew with the edge of the sword*" (Josue vi. 21. Cf. also x. 28 and xi. 14).

Verses 12, 13.—David's enemies shall be destroyed, because they have plotted evil against him, but they will not be able to accomplish their designs, because they shall be routed and forced to flee.

The second part of verse 13, as we find it in the Septuagint and Vulgate, has no meaning. The Hebrew text reads: "*With thy bowstrings thou wilt aim at their faces.*" "The enemy will turn and flee when thou advancest against them in battle array with drawn bows."

Verse 14.—The psalm closes with a chorus of the people. "Arise, O Lord, in Thy strength against the enemies of Thy people. We shall sing the praises of Thy might."

PSALMUS XXI

(HEB. XXII)

1 In finem, pro susceptione
matutina, Psalmus David.

2 Deus, Deus meus, respice in
me, quare me dereliquisti?

longe a salute mea verba
delictorum meorum.

3 Deus meus, clamabo per
diem, et non exaudies;

et nocte, et non ad insipientiam
mihi.

4 Tu autem in sancto habitas,
laus Israel.

5 In te speraverunt patres
nostri;
speraverunt, et liberasti eos.

6 Ad te clamaverunt, et salvi
facti sunt;
in te speraverunt, et non
sunt confusi.

7 Ego autem sum vermis, et
non homo;
opprobrium hominum, et
abjectio plebis.

8 Omnes videntes me derise-
runt me;
locuti sunt labiis, et move-
runt caput.

9 Speravit in Domino, eripiat
eum;

PSALM XXI

(HEB. XXII)

1 Unto the end, for the morn-
ing protection, a psalm
for David.

2 O God, my God, look upon
me: why hast thou for-
saken me?

far from my salvation are
the words of my sins.

3 O my God, I shall cry by
day, and thou wilt not
hear:

and by night, and it shall
not be reputed as folly
in me.

4 But thou dwellest in the
holy place, the praise of
Israel.

5 In thee have our fathers
hoped:

they have hoped, and thou
hast delivered them.

6 They cried to thee, and
they were saved.

they trusted in thee, and
were not confounded.

7 But I am a worm, and no
man:

the reproach of men, and
the outcast of the people.

8 All they that saw me have
laughed me to scorn;

they have spoken with the
lips, and wagged the head.

9 He hoped in the Lord, let
him deliver him:

- salvum faciat eum, quoniam
vult eum. let him save him, seeing he
delighteth in him.
- 10 Quoniam tu es qui extraxisti
me de ventre, 10 For thou art he that hast
drawn me out of the
womb:
spes mea ab uberibus matris
meæ. my hope from the breasts
of my mother.
- 11 In te projectus sum ex
utero; 11 I was cast upon thee from
the womb.
de ventre matris meæ Deus
meus es tu; From my mother's womb
thou art my God,
- 12 ne discesseris a me,
Quoniam tribulatio proxima
est, 12 Depart not from me.
For tribulation is very near:
quoniam non est qui adjuvet.
for there is none to help me.
- 13 Circumdederunt me vituli
multi, 13 Many calves have surround-
ed me:
tauri pingues obsederunt me. fat bulls have besieged me.
- 14 Aperuerunt super me os
suum, 14 They have opened their
mouths against me,
sicut leo rapiens et rugiens. as a lion ravening and roar-
ing.
- 15 Sicut aqua effusus sum;
et dispersa sunt omnia ossa
mea. 15 I am poured out like water;
and all my bones are scat-
tered.
Factum est cor meum tam-
quam cera My heart is become like wax
liquescens in medio ventris
mei. melting in the midst of my
bowels.
- 16 Aruit tamquam testa virtus
mea, 16 My strength is dried up like
a potsherd,
et lingua mea adhæsit fauci- and my tongue hath cleaved
bus meis, to my jaws:
et in pulverem mortis dedux- and thou hast brought me
isti me. down into the dust of
death.
- 17 Quoniam circumdederunt
me canes multi: 17 For many dogs have encom-
passed me:
concilium malignantium ob- the council of the malignant
sedit me. hath besieged me.
Foderunt manus meas et They have dug my hands
pedes meos, and feet.

- 18 Dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea.
Ipsi vero consideraverunt et inspexerunt me.
- 19 Diviserunt sibi vestimenta mea,
et super vestem meam miserunt sortem.
- 20 Tu autem, Domine, ne elongaveris auxilium tuum a me;
ad defensionem meam conspice.
- 21 Erue a framea, Deus, animam meam,
et de manu canis unicam meam.
- 22 Salva me ex ore leonis,
et a cornibus unicornium humilitatem meam.
- 23 Narrabo nomen tuum fratribus meis;
in medio ecclesiæ laudabo te.
- 24 Qui timetis Dominum, laudate eum;
universum semen Jacob, glorificate eum.
- 25 Timeat eum omne semen Israel,
quoniam non sprevit, neque despexit deprecationem pauperis;
Nec avertit faciem suam a me,
et cum clamarem ad eum exaudivit me.
- 26 Apud te laus mea in ecclesia magna;
vota mea reddam in conspectu timentium eum.
- 18 They have numbered all my bones.
And they have looked and stared upon me.
- 19 They parted my garments amongst them;
and upon my vesture they cast lots.
- 20 But thou, O Lord, remove not thy help to a distance from me;
look towards my defence.
- 21 Deliver, O God, my soul from the sword:
my only one from the hand of the dog.
- 22 Save me from the lion's mouth;
and my lowness from the horns of the unicorns.
- 23 I will declare thy name to my brethren:
in the midst of the church will I praise thee.
- 24 Ye that fear the Lord, praise him:
all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him.
- 25 Let all the seed of Israel fear him:
because he hath not slighted nor despised the supplication of the poor man.
Neither hath he turned away his face from me:
and when I cried to him he heard me.
- 26 With thee is my praise in a great church:
I will pay my vows in the sight of them that fear him.

- 27 Edent pauperes, et saturabuntur;
et laudabunt Dominum qui requirunt eum;
vivent corda eorum in sæculum sæculi.
- 28 Reminiscentur et convertentur ad Dominum
universi fines terræ;
Et adorabunt in conspectu ejus
universæ familiæ Gentium;
29 Quoniam Domini est regnum,
et ipse dominabitur Gentium.
- 30 Manducaverunt et adoraverunt omnes pingues terræ;
in conspectu ejus cadent omnes qui descendunt in terram.
- 31 Et anima mea illi vivet;
et semen meum serviet ipsi.
- 32 Annuntiabitur Domino generatio ventura;
et annuntiabunt cœli justitiam ejus,
populo qui nascetur, quem fecit Dominus.
- 27 The poor shall eat and shall be filled:
and they shall praise the Lord that seek him:
their hearts shall live for ever and ever.
- 28 All the ends of the earth shall remember,
and shall be converted to the Lord:
And all the kindreds of the Gentiles shall adore in his sight.
- 29 For the kingdom is the Lord's;
and he shall have dominion over the nations.
- 30 All the fat ones of the earth have eaten and have adored:
all they that go down to the earth shall fall before him.
- 31 And to him my soul shall live:
and my seed shall serve him.
- 32 There shall be declared to the Lord a generation to come:
and the heavens shall shew forth his justice
to a people that shall be born, which the Lord hath made.

PSALM XXI

THIS psalm is clearly Messianic. It is a prophecy of Christ's passion and death; or, as Strauss terms it, a "programme of Christ's crucifixion." The second Council of Constantinople (553) condemned the opinion of Theodore of Mopsuestia, who taught that

the writers of the New Testament applied the words of this psalm to the sufferings of Christ by mere accommodation. We also have the testimony of Holy Scripture: "*And after they had crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying: They divided my garments among them; and upon my vesture they cast lots.*" (Matt. xxvii. 35; cf. also Matt. xxvii. 39, 46; Mark xv. 34; John xix. 24.)

It is an open question whether this psalm is directly or only typically Messianic. Nearly all Catholic interpreters hold that it is a direct prophecy since it contains much that can be applied to Christ alone. "Starting with a disconsolate cry of anguish, the psalm passes on to a trustful cry for help, and ends in vows of thanksgiving and a vision of worldwide results which spring from the deliverance of the sufferer. In no psalm do we trace such an accumulation of the most excruciating outward and inward suffering pressing upon the complainant, in connection with the most perfect innocence. . . . There is not a single sound of imprecation mingled with its complaints." ¹

Synopsis.—Christ complains that He is abandoned by God (2–3) who has ever been the protector of those who sought refuge in Him (4–6). He is an object of contempt and His trust in God is derided (7–9). He has ever trusted in God and now calls upon Him in the hour of affliction (10–12) when surrounded by brutal enemies (13–14). He suffers untold agonies (15, 16) caused by His persecutors (17–19). He prays for deliverance (20–22), and vows thanksgiving (23–25) and sacrifices (26, 27)

¹ Delitzsch.

for deliverance, which God will grant. As a result of His deliverance all nations shall be converted to the worship of the one true God (28-32).

Verse 1.—The Hebrew "*Al-ayyeleth hasshahar*" (Vulgate, "*for the morning protection*") means "*for the hind of the dawn*," and probably refers to the melody of the psalm set to the tune "*Hind of the Dawn*." Cf. M'Swiney for other conjectures.

Verse 2.—These are the words of Christ upon the cross: "*Eloi, eloi, lamma sabachthani*," i.e., "*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?*" Christ used the Aramaic "*sabachthani*" instead of the Hebrew "*azabbtani*," and it is probable that He also used the Aramaic "*Eloi*" as given by St. Mark, instead of the Hebrew "*Eli*," which St. Matthew has taken from the psalm. The words "*Look upon me*" are not found in the Hebrew, and were not used by Christ on the cross. They probably owe their origin to a wrong pointing of the second "*Eli*," making it read "*Elay*"—"to me." A verb was then needed to complete the sense: "*look*" or "*attend to me*."

Christ took upon Himself the sins of all mankind in order to expiate them upon the cross. "*He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows . . . He was wounded for our iniquities. He was bruised for our sins . . . and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*" (Is. liii. 4 et seq.). Therefore Christ, in His human nature, experienced the wrath of God against all the sins of mankind, past, present, and future. In some manner the consoling and sustaining power of Christ's divine nature was withheld, that His human nature might suffer utter desolation and all the pangs of human agony. In this time of

desolation Christ cries out, "*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?*" It is not a cry of impatience or despair; it is a cry of anguish from One who knows that He is in the union of love with God, and it is intended to reveal to us the depths of His sufferings and sorrow.

"To comprehend how the Son of God could speak of Himself as forsaken by His Father, we should first need to explain how the Infinite Being could take upon Himself a finite nature; for between these two humiliations there is only a difference of degree, . . . the abandonment of Jesus upon the cross only continued what was first accomplished in the Incarnation, and in these two mysteries the Godhead remains equally inviolable. With the Christ in His anguish it was even as with those mountain chains whose white crests pierce the clouds. Often the tempests do havoc with their rugged sides, strewing them with the wreckage of the storm: yet naught can trouble the snowy peaks, which far, far above the whirlwind's reach, stand evermore serene and crowned with light."¹

"*The words of my sins,*" i.e., "the prayers which I offer up while bending beneath my burden of sin," "are far from availing me for deliverance." The Hebrew text gives a better reading: "*Far from my deliverance are the words of my roaring.*" Cf. Matt. xxvii. 46. "*Jesus cried out with a loud voice*" (Heb. v. 7). "*Who in the days of his flesh with a strong cry and tears offering up prayers and supplications.*"

Verse 3.—"My cries and groanings avail me not. I cry by day but Thou hearest not; by night and not without reason, for no respite is found."

The Hebrew "*dumiyah*" is found only here and

¹ Fouard, "The Christ the Son of God," vol. ii. p. 338.

in Ps. xxxviii-lxi-lxiv. The meaning is doubtful. The Septuagint and Vulgate render it "*folly*" in this passage. Other versions render it "*silence*," "*rest*," or "*quiet*." "I cry by day and Thou hearest not; by night but no rest (respite) is given." This gives a meaning demanded by the parallelism. Day and night Christ prayed for deliverance from the agonies of His bitter passion. This prayer upon the cross is but the final outburst. In the garden of Olives Christ spent the time in prayer: "*My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me*" (Matt. xxvi. 39). He did not wish to escape suffering and death for our sins; it was for this that He assumed human nature, and even in infancy His precious blood began to flow for us. "So Bethlehem is a prelude to Calvary, and even the Infant's cradle is tinged with a crimson reflection from the Redeemer's cross."¹ "*My Father, if this chalice may not pass away but I must drink it, Thy will be done*" (Matt. xxvi. 42). "*The chalice which My Father has given me, shall I not drink it?*" (John xviii. 11). Christ's prayer in the Garden and on the cross reveal the natural instincts of His human nature shrinking and quailing before the terrible ordeal of the crucifixion.

Verses 4-6.—In these verses the Sufferer contrasts His lot with that of the fathers whose prayers were ever answered. "My prayers and supplications are unheeded, and yet Thou art enthroned in the Sanctuary; Thou dwellest in our midst to protect and deliver—Thou who art the praise (glory) of Israel," i.e., the author of Israel's glory, or, the object of Israel's praises. In Hebrew: "*Yet Thou, O Holy One, art enthroned upon the praises of Israel.*"

¹ Farrar, "Life of Christ," p. 10.

"Our fathers trusted in Thee and Thou didst deliver them; they cried out to Thee and Thou didst save them; they were not put to shame for their hope in Thee, for Thou didst grant them their desires."

Verses 7-9.—"Thou didst deliver the fathers when they turned to Thee in supplication, but my pleadings are in vain though my afflictions are far greater. I am the most despised of men, like a worm trampled under foot, exposed to the derision and contempt of all who see me. My hope in Thee is turned to my shame. They laugh me to scorn saying: 'He trusted in God; he boasted of God's friendship and love, now let his God deliver him.'"

In Hebrew: "*Roll it upon Yahveh*" (i.e., leave thy troubles to the Lord); "*let Him deliver him. Let Him rescue him when He delighted in him.*" We find these prophecies reflected in Isaias, and accurately fulfilled in the passion of Christ. "*Despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and his look was, as it were, hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not*" (Is. liii. 3). "*And they that passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads . . . He trusted in God; let Him now deliver Him if He will have Him; for He said: I am the Son of God*" (Matt. xxvii. 39-43).

Verses 10-12.—My enemies truly say: "He trusted in God." "Thou hast ever been my hope, yea, from the hour of my birth. Thou it was who even brought me forth from my mother's womb. From the womb I was committed to Thy protection.¹

¹ This is probably a reference to the ancient custom of placing new born children upon the father's knee. "Why received upon the knees? Why suckled at the breasts?" (Job iii. 12.)

Thou art my God and my protector. Therefore be not far from me now for trouble and affliction are near at hand and there is none other to save me."

Verses 13, 14.—The tribulation mentioned in verse 12 is graphically described in verses 13–19. Christ's enemies are represented as enraged bulls. Many bullocks and strong bulls of Bashan surround me. Instead of "*fat bulls*" the Hebrew has "*strong ones*" (bulls) "*of Bashan.*" Bashan was a fertile tract belonging to the tribe of Manasses. It was formerly the kingdom of Og, and was noted for its fierce and powerful bulls. The persecutors are also compared to a roaring lion greedy for prey. (Cf. *Amos* iii. 4.)

Verses 15, 16.—"My very life is ebbing away like water; all my bones are wrested from their sockets; my heart grows faint; my strength is withered away; my tongue cleaves to my mouth from torturing thirst; Thou hast brought me down to the brink of death."

Melting of the heart signifies great fear or anguish: "*The heart of the people was struck with fear and melted like water*" (*Jos.* vii. 5). The agonies of the crucifixion, the loss of blood, and the inflammation of His wounds caused such a thirst that Christ's tongue cleaved to His mouth, and He cried out, "I thirst" (*John* xix. 28). Thirst is one of the greatest tortures of the crucified.

The enemies of Christ would have no power over Him were it not given them from above (*John* xix. 11). Hence it is God who brought Him down into the dust of death. *Isaias* (liii. 2 et seq.) speaks of Christ's suffering as being in accordance with the will of God and decreed by Him.

Verses 17-19.—Christ's persecutors, compared to enraged bulls (13) and roaring lions (14), are now compared to savage dogs. "In the Old Testament dogs are the fierce prowlers of the night and scavengers of the streets."¹ They usually went in packs and are compared to a band of evil-doers or maltreaters.

"My enemies have dug, or pierced, my hands and my feet; my body is so distended and my bones so out of joint, that my enemies may count them every one. And yet they look upon me and gloat over all my sufferings." According to custom the executioners divide amongst themselves the garments and other belongings of the executed. The history of the Passion shows us how literally all this prophecy was fulfilled.

Instead of "*They have dug my hands and my feet,*" the present Hebrew text reads: "*As a lion, my hands and my feet.*" This reading gives no sense and is at variance with all the ancient versions. It is probably due to a copyist's mistaking "*kaaru*" (they pierced, or dug) for "*kâari*" (as a lion). Delitzsch says: "Nothing of any weight can be urged against the rendering of the Septuagint, the Peshito, the Vulgate, and St. Jerome."

In verse 18, instead of "*they have numbered all my bones,*" the Hebrew reads: "*I count all my bones.*"

Verses 20-22.—The petition of verse 12 is resumed and further insisted upon. "Delay not Thy help but come to my assistance. Snatch me (my soul) from the sword—from the jaws of death—and save me from the power of my enemies."

¹ Briggs.

Christ's enemies are still compared to savage beasts. "Deliver me (my only one¹) from the paw of the dog, and save me from the lion's mouth. Deliver me, humbled and afflicted, from the horns of wild bulls."

The Hebrew reads: "*But Thou Yahveh, be not far off, O my Strength, haste Thou to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword: mine only one from the paw of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth and from the horns of the wild bulls. Thou wilt answer me.*"

The Hebrew "*re'em*," usually rendered "*unicorn*," most probably means a wild bull or buffalo. In *Deut.* xxxiii. 17 the Vulgate translates it "*rhinoceros*," but it is evident from the context that it is an animal having two horns. In what sense does Christ pray for deliverance? Death is already upon Him and He is breathing His last with the words "*It is consummated.*" He can not mean deliverance from suffering and death as when He prayed in the garden, "*Let this chalice pass from Me.*" Yet St. Paul says that "*He was heard when He offered up prayers and supplications to Him who was able to save Him from death.*" He can mean nothing else than victory over death by His glorious resurrection. "*Whom God hath raised up having loosed the sorrows of hell, as it was impossible that He should be holden by it*" (*Acts* ii. 24). "*Death shall no more have dominion over Him*" (*Rom.* vi. 9).

Verses 23-25.—The psalm now passes from plaintive supplication to joyous thanksgiving. Verse 22 (according to the Hebrew text) expresses an assurance of being heard and delivered. The Sufferer therefore vows thanksgiving. "I will publish

¹ "My soul, abandoned by all, lonely." Cf. *Ps.* xxiv. 16.

abroad to all my brethren ¹ the praises of Thy name; I will glorify Thee openly in the assemblies of the people. I will call upon all to praise Thee. I will say: Let all those who worship the Lord, praise Him; let all the descendants of Jacob glorify the Lord; let all the children of Israel reverence and worship Him, because He heard and answered me when I cried unto Him in my affliction."

In Hebrew verse 25 reads: "*For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath He hid His face from him, and when he cried, He hath hearkened to him.*"

Christ proclaimed the name of God to His brethren and called upon all to glorify it, when He sent forth the apostles saying, "*Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark xvi. 15).

Verses 26, 27.—"Because Thou wilt restore me to life, and make me to triumph over death and hell, Thou shalt be the subject (Hebr. "*cause*") of my songs of praise before the congregation of those who worship (fear) Thee. In their presence will I pay my vows of thank-offerings. The humble and afflicted—those who seek after God—shall sit down to the sacrificial repast; they shall eat their fill and voice the praises of the Lord. Their hearts shall be refreshed with a newness of life that will never fail."

The paying of vows was usually a thank-offering accompanied by a sacrificial repast to which the

¹ All those to whom the Gospel has been preached. "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one. For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren saying: "I will declare thy name to my brethren" (Heb. ii. 11, 12).

servants, the widows, the orphans, and the strangers were invited. "*Thou shalt feast before the Lord . . . thou and thy son, and thy daughter and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant and the Levite . . . and the stranger and the fatherless, and the widow who abide with you*" (Deut. xvi. 11). Cf. also Deut. xii. 18; Ex. xviii. 12; 1 Kings ix. 13; 1 Cor. x. 16 et seq.

"*Poor man*" is sometimes used in Sacred Scriptures to mean the just, the pious, the upright. The parallel term "*those who seek Him,*" shows that it is so used in this passage.

The sacrificial banquets of the Old Law prefigured the Eucharistic Banquet of the New, in which Christ is the victim of the sacrifice and the spiritual food of those who partake of the banquet. Those who eat of this spiritual food shall be refreshed with an eternal newness of life: "*I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall not hunger*" (John vi. 35); "*He that eateth this bread shall live for ever*" (John vi. 59).

Verses 28, 29.—Christ's death and resurrection will bring back to the worship of God all the nations that have forgotten Him and turned aside to the worship of idols and false gods. All nations shall worship God, for they belong to His kingdom and He rules them all. St. Paul gives the same reason for the call of the Gentiles to the Church. "*Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also. For it is the one God, that justifieth circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith*" (Rom. iii. 29, 30).

Verse 30.—Not only all nations but even all classes and conditions of men shall worship God. The rich and the poor, the high and the low, Jew and

Gentile, shall partake of the Eucharistic Banquet and adore the one true God of all.

"*All they that go down to the earth*" is used in opposition to the "*fat ones of the earth*," and means the poor, the humble, the afflicted.

Verse 31.—"When delivered from the power of death I (my soul) shall be filled with loving gratitude. I will ever battle for the cause of God and my followers will be His devoted servants."

In Hebrew the first part of this verse belongs to the preceding verse, thus: "*All they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him: and he who can not keep alive his soul. A seed shall serve Him*," etc.

Verse 32.—Age to age, and generation to generation will proclaim the mercy and justice of God in delivering Christ from the power of death and crowning him with honor and glory. Thus according to the Hebrew, which reads: "*It shall be told to the generation concerning the Lord; They shall come and declare His righteousness to a future people, that He hath done it!*"

According to the Vulgate: "*A generation yet to come shall be ascribed (declared) to the Lord*," i.e., future generations shall worship the true God, and shall announce His merciful works to generations yet unborn but which the Lord has elected and prepared for Himself.

"*Heavens*" is an interpolation peculiar to the Vulgate, not justified by the text, nor by any other version.¹ It may have crept in here from *Ps. xlix. 6*.

¹ M'Swiney.

PSALMUS XXII

(HEB. XXIII)

- 1 Psalmus David.
 Dominus regit me, et nihil
 mihi deerit:
 2 in loco pascuæ ibi me collo-
 cavit.
 Super aquam refectionis edu-
 cavit me,
 3 animam meam convertit.
 Deduxit me super semitas
 justitiæ,
 propter nomen suum.
- 4 Nam, et si ambulavero in
 medio umbræ mortis,
 non timebo mala, quoniam
 tu mecum es.
 Virga tua, et baculus tuus,
 ipsa me consolata sunt.
- 5 Parasti in conspectu meo
 mensam, adversus eos qui
 tribulant me;
 impinguasti in oleo caput
 meum;
 et calix meus inebrians quam
 præclarus est!
- 6 Et misericordia tua subse-
 quetur me
 omnibus diebus vitæ meæ;
 Et ut inhabitem in domo
 Domini,
 in longitudinem dierum.

PSALM XXII

(HEB. XXIII)

- 1 A psalm for David.
 The Lord ruleth me: and I
 shall want nothing.
 2 He hath set me in a place of
 pasture.
 He hath brought me up, on
 the water of refreshment:
 3 he hath converted my soul.
 He hath led me on the paths
 of justice,
 for his own name's sake.
- 4 For though I should walk
 in the midst of the shadow
 of death,
 I will fear no evils, for thou
 art with me.
 Thy rod and thy staff, they
 have comforted me.
- 5 Thou hast prepared a table
 before me, against them
 that afflict me.
 Thou hast anointed my head
 with oil;
 and my chalice which ine-
 briateth me, how goodly
 is it!
- 6 And thy mercy will follow me
 all the days of my life.
 And that I may dwell in the
 house of the Lord
 unto length of days.

PSALM XXII

DELITZSCH thinks this psalm belongs to the time of Absalom's rebellion. "It is like an amplification of *Ps. iv. 8.*"

Synopsis.—David represents God with His loving care and protection, as a good shepherd (1-4); and as a benevolent host (5). He expresses confidence of lifelong blessings (6).

Verses 1-3.—David represents God's loving care for him as that of a shepherd for his sheep. "The Lord rules me as a shepherd his sheep. The Lord is my shepherd and I want for nothing. He supplies my every need. He cares for me as a shepherd that places his sheep in green pastures and leads them to refreshing waters (Hebrew: "waters of rest or quiet") where they may lie down to rest secure from the heat of the day. He refreshes my soul; He gives me newness of life and fills my heart with gladness. In His goodness (for His name's sake) He guides me along the right paths—paths that lead to green pastures and cooling waters—lest I stray and be lost"; i.e., "He guides me in the ways of justice and righteousness."

Verse 4.—"Even though the path lead through dark and dangerous ravines, I have no fear, for Thou art with me. Thou goest before me (as do shepherds of the East) with Thy staff to ward off all lurking foes."

"*Shadow of death*" is frequently used in Sacred Scriptures to signify dense darkness. (Cf. *Job xxviii. 3*; *Jer. ii. 6.*) There may also be a reference to the dangers lurking in the dark ravines. The meaning is: "Whatever dangers may surround me

I have nothing to fear, for the Lord is protecting me." (Cf. *Ps.* iv. 9-10.)

The Hebrew reads: "*In the valley of the shadow of death.*" The meaning is the same as in the Vulgate.

The rod and staff mentioned here is the shepherd's staff¹ or crook used as a support in walking and as a means of defense against foes.

Verse 5.—This verse represents God as a bountiful host spreading a sumptuous banquet before the Psalmist under the very eyes of his enemies. The Psalmist is an honored guest; his head is anointed with oil—sweet-smelling spices—and his cup is filled with the best of wine. In Hebrew: "*My cup is fullness,*" i.e., filled to overflowing. The Vulgate renders it inebriating, exhilarating.

Verse 6.—Under the figure of a banquet David describes his present prosperity, of which even his enemies are unwilling witnesses. He now adds that he will enjoy lifelong blessings and prosperity. His present good fortune will follow or pursue him through life. The idea of pursuit is probably suggested by the thought of his enemies.

The Hebrew reads: "*Nought but goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.*"

In the Septuagint and Vulgate the words "*akh tob*" ("nought but goodness") of verse 6 have been joined to verse 5 with the meaning "*How goodly!*" To dwell in the house of the Lord—the Tabernacle—probably means to enjoy special care and protection.

¹ Some interpreters maintain that verse 4 represents God as a guide. The staff would then mean the pilgrim's or traveler's staff.

PSALMUS XXIII

(HEB. XXIV)

- 1 Prima sabbati, Psalmus David.

Chorus

- Domini est terra, et plenitudo ejus;
orbis terrarum, et universi qui habitant in eo.
2 Quia ipse super maria fundavit eum,
et super flumina præparavit eum.

Solo

- 3 Quis ascendet in montem Domini?
aut quis stabit in loco sancto ejus?

Chorus Answers

- 4 Innocens manibus et mundo corde,
qui non accepit in vano animam suam,
nec juravit in dolo proximo suo.
5 Hic accipiet benedictionem a Domino:
et misericordiam a Deo salutari suo.
6 Hæc est generatio quærentium eum,
quærentium faciem Dei Jacob. Selah.

PSALM XXIII

(HEB. XXIV)

- 1 On the first day of the week, a psalm for David.

Chorus

- The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof:
the world, and all they that dwell therein.
2 For he hath founded it upon the seas;
and hath prepared it upon the rivers.

Solo

- 3 Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord?
or who shall stand in his holy place?

Chorus Answers

- 4 The innocent in hands, and clean of heart,
who hath not taken his soul in vain,
nor sworn deceitfully to his neighbor.
5 He shall receive a blessing from the Lord,
and mercy from God his Saviour.
6 This is the generation of them that seek him,
of them that seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah.

First Voice

7 Attolite portas, principes,
vestras,
et elevamini, portæ æterna-
les,
et introibit rex gloriæ.

Second Voice from Within

8 Quis est iste rex gloriæ?

Chorus

Dominus fortis et potens,
Dominus potens in prælio.

First Voice Repeats

9 Attollite portas, principes,
vestras,
et elevamini, portæ æterna-
les,
et introibit rex gloriæ.

Second Voice

10 Quis est iste rex gloriæ?

Chorus Answers

Dominus virtutum ipse est
rex gloriæ. Selah.

First Voice

7 Lift up your gates, O ye
princes,
and be ye lifted up, O eter-
nal gates:
and the King of glory shall
enter in.

Second Voice from Within

8 Who is this King of glory?

Chorus

The Lord who is strong and
mighty:
The Lord mighty in battle.

First Voice Repeats

9 Lift up your gates, O ye
princes,
and be ye lifted up, O
eternal gates:
and the King of glory shall
enter in.

Second Voice

10 Who is this King of glory?

Chorus Answers

the Lord of hosts, he is the
King of glory. Selah.

PSALM XXIII

THIS psalm is dramatic in form and well suited as a processional hymn for bringing the Ark of the Covenant into the Holy City. Some think that it was used at the time the Ark was brought from the house of Obbededom to Mount Sion (2 Kings vi. 12 et seq.). The mention of the Lord as a warrior, mighty in battle, would suggest some occasion when the Ark

was brought back to Sion after having been taken out to accompany the army to battle. From the words of Urias (2 *Kings* xi. 11) it seems that the Ark accompanied the army of Israel against the Ammonites. "*The ark of God and Israel and Juda dwell in tents . . . and shall I go into my house to eat and to drink?*"

Synopsis.—The psalm consists of two parts (1-6 and 7-10). The first is well adapted for the procession with the Ark; the other for the solemn entrance at the gates of the city.

Such is the majesty of God (1, 2) that he who would enter His sanctuary and receive His blessing must be free from all sin (3-6). These verses closely resemble *Ps.* xiv. In the second part the Psalmist addresses the gates of the city, commanding them to open wide for the entrance of the Lord of hosts (7-10).

This psalm was probably intended for responsive singing as indicated in the text given above.

The Church applies it to the Ascension of Christ into heaven.

Verse 1.—"*Prima sabbati*"—"on the first day of the week"—these words are not found in the Hebrew text. They were added to the Septuagint and probably refer to the liturgical use of the psalm which was sung in the Temple and is still sung in the synagogues on Sundays. The Lord sits enthroned, as it were, upon the Ark of the Covenant, which is borne upon the shoulders of the priests and Levites. As the procession moves on with joyful shouting and with sound of trumpet,¹ the people break forth in praise of God. Great is the majesty of Him who sits

¹ 2 *Kings* vi. 15.

enthroned upon the Ark! The world is His, and all that it contains; the earth and all that dwells thereon! The dominion of the Lord is not confined to the narrow limits of Judea; it extends throughout the whole world and reaches to all nations.

Verse 2.—“ *The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof* ” because He hath created it. He created the earth and made the dry land to rise above the surface of the seas so that it seems to rest upon them as its foundation. Calmet notes that this may be a reference to a belief of the ancients that the land floats upon the surface of the seas.

Verse 3.—Who, then, is worthy to appear before such a God of majesty and power? Who is worthy to go up to Sion where He shall dwell on the Ark of the Covenant? Who is worthy to enter His sanctuary and be His guest? (*Ps. xiv. 1*).

Verses 4, 5.—Verses 4, 5 answer the question of verse 3. He that would come before the majesty of God must be innocent in act and pure in mind; one who does not give himself up to sin and sinful habits; especially one who does not swear falsely (deceitfully) to his neighbor. (*Cf. Ps. xiv. 4*.) Such a one shall enjoy the beneficence and mercy of God the Saviour.

Verse 6.—The true worshipers of the Lord should be such as described in verses 4, 5. The Hebrew reads: “ *This is the generation of those who aspire after Him; who seek Thy face—Jacob*,” i.e., such as those described above are the true worshipers of God, the true Israelites, the true offspring of Jacob.

Verse 7.—The procession has now reached the walls of the city and a voice cries out: “ Lift up

your gates,¹ O Princes, be lifted up, ye ancient² gates, that the King of glory may pass through."

The Hebrew reads: "*Lift up your heads, O gates; be lifted up, ye ancient gates, that the King of glory may pass through.*"

Verse 8.—In response to verse 7, a voice from within the walls cries out as if demanding the watchword: "Who is this King of Glory?" The people respond: "It is the Lord, strong and powerful; the Lord, mighty in battle, that demands admittance within your gates." Again a voice from the procession calls upon the gates to open and admit the King of glory (9), and the same answer is received: "Who then is this King of glory?" (10a). Then a shout goes up: "The Lord of hosts,³ He is the King of glory" (10b).

¹ The gates were raised and lowered instead of opening out.

² Ancient rather than *eternal*.

³ 1 Kings xvii. 45. "The Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel."

PSALMUS XXIV

(HEB. XXV)

- 1 In finem, Psalmus David.
- ¶ ad te, Domine, levavi
 animam meam.
- 2 ¶ Deus meus, in te confido;
 non erubescam.
- 3 Neque irrideant me in-
 imici mei;
 ¶ etenim universi qui sus-
 tinent te non confun-
 duntur.
- 4 Confundantur omnes in-
 iqua agentes superva-
 cue.
- ¶ Vias tuas, Domine, de-
 monstra mihi,
 et semitas tuas edoce me.
- 5 ¶ Dirige me in veritate tua,
 et doce me,
 quia tu es Deus salvator
 meus,
 et te sustinui tota die.
- 6 ¶ Reminiscere miserationum
 tuarum, Domine,
 et misericordiarum tuar-
 um quæ a sæculo sunt.
- 7 ¶ Delicta juventutis meæ, et
 ignorantias meas ne me-
 mineris.
 Secundum misericordiam
 tuam memento mei tu;

PSALM XXIV

(HEB. XXV)

- 1 Unto the end, a psalm for
 David.
- ¶ To thee, O Lord, have I
 lifted up my soul.
- 2 ¶ In thee, O my God, I put
 my trust; let me not be
 ashamed.
- 3 Neither let my enemies
 laugh at me:
 ¶ for none of them that
 wait on thee shall be
 confounded.
- 4 Let all them be con-
 founded that act un-
 just things without
 cause.
- ¶ Shew, O Lord, thy ways
 to me,
 and teach me thy paths.
- 5 ¶ Direct me in thy truth,
 and teach me;
 for thou art God my Sa-
 viour;
 and on thee have I waited
 all the day long.
- 6 ¶ Remember, O Lord, thy
 bowels of compassion;
 and thy mercies that are
 from the beginning of
 the world.
- 7 ¶ The sins of my youth and
 my ignorances do not
 remember.
 According to thy mercy
 remember thou me:

- propter bonitatem tuam,
Domine.
- 8 **D** Dulcis et rectus Dominus;
propter hoc legem dabit
delinquentibus in via.
- 9 **'** Diriget mansuetos in iudicio;
docebit mites vias suas.
- 10 **D** Universæ viæ Domini, misericordia et veritas,
requirentibus testamentum ejus et testimonia ejus.
- 11 **b** Propternomen-tuum, Domine, propitiaberis peccato meo;
multum est enim.
- 12 **D** Quis est homo qui timet Dominum?
legem statuit ei in viam quam elegit.
- 13 **D** Anima ejus in bonis demorabitur;
et semen ejus hereditabit terram.
- 14 **D** Firmamentum est Dominus timentibus eum;
et testamentum ipsius ut manifestetur illis.
- 15 **y** Oculi mei semper ad Dominum,
quoniam ipse evellet de laqueo pedes meos.
- 16 **D** Respice in me, et miserere mei;
quia unicus et pauper sum ego.
- 17 **y** Tribulationes cordis mei multiplicatæ sunt;
de necessitatibus meis erue me.
- for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.
- 8 **D** The Lord is sweet and righteous:
therefore he will give a law to sinners in the way.
- 9 **'** He will guide the mild in judgment:
he will teach the meek his ways.
- 10 **D** All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth,
to them that seek after his covenant and his testimonies.
- 11 **b** For thy name's sake, O Lord, thou wilt pardon my sin:
for it is great.
- 12 **D** Who is the man that feareth the Lord?
He hath appointed him a law in the way he hath chosen.
- 13 **D** His soul shall dwell in good things:
and his seed shall inherit the land.
- 14 **D** The Lord is a firmament to them that fear him:
and his covenant shall be made manifest to them.
- 15 **y** My eyes are ever towards the Lord:
for he shall pluck my feet out of the snare.
- 16 **D** Look thou upon me, and have mercy on me;
for I am alone and poor.
- 17 **y** The troubles of my heart are multiplied:
deliver me from my necessities.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 18 7 Vide humilitatem meam
et laborem meum,
et dimitte universa delicta
mea. | 18 7 See my abjection and my
labor;
and forgive me all my sins. |
| 19 7 Respice inimicos meos,
quoniam multiplicati
sunt,
et odio iniquo oderunt me. | 19 7 Consider my enemies for
they are multiplied,

and have hated me with
an unjust hatred. |
| 20 7 Custodi animam meam, et
erue me;
non erubescam, quoniam
speravi in te. | 20 7 Keep thou my soul, and
deliver me:
I shall not be ashamed,
for I have hoped in thee. |
| 21 7 Innocentes et recti adhæ-
serunt mihi,

quia sustinui te. | 21 7 The innocent and the up-
right have adhered to
me:
because I have waited on
thee. |
| 22 D Libera, Deus, Israel
ex omnibus tribulationi-
bus suis. | 22 D Deliver Israel, O God,
from all his tribulations. |

PSALM XXIV

THIS psalm is alphabetical in form and closely resembles Psalm xxxiii. In both the *Vau* (ו) verse is lacking, and both have an additional *Pe* (פ) verse at the end. In this psalm the *Koph* (כ) verse is replaced by a second *Resh* (ר) verse. There is nothing in the psalm to indicate the time or occasion of its composition. It is a prayer for aid in time of trouble. The Psalmist is conscious of fidelity to the law of God and expresses firm belief that the godly will be rewarded with peace and prosperity. In the Septuagint and Vulgate the title reads: "Unto the end, a psalm of David." In Hebrew it is simply "A psalm of David."

Synopsis.—David expresses confidence in God (1-4a). He begs for guidance in the path of

righteousness and implores forgiveness of his sins (4b-11), for true happiness is found only in the service of God (12-15). He prays to be delivered from his enemies and from his many troubles (16-21). The psalm ends with a chorus (22).

Verses 1-3a.—“Detached from all earthly desires, I turn to Thee, O Lord, with loving confidence. In Thee do I put my trust. May I never be put to shame by disappointed hopes. May my enemy never have it to say: ‘In vain did he trust in his God for He heard him not.’”

The phrase, “*I lift up my soul to Thee*,” implies separation from worldly things and self-surrender to the will of God.

Verses 3b-4a.—The Psalmist gives the reason for his firm confidence: “No one who has recourse to Thee and seeks Thy aid shall be left unaided. But those who sin maliciously shall be confounded; their hopes shall be frustrated and their prayers unheeded.”

“*To wait on God*” means to trust Him; to look to Him for help.

“*Without cause*,” i.e., from pure malice; without hope of gain; without provocation.

Some understand it to mean “without success,” thus: “let all my enemies be confounded (or, “all my enemies shall be confounded”) when they see their evil designs against me prove futile.”¹

Verses 4b, 5.—David begs to know the divine will and to be guided in its fulfilment. “Grant, O Lord, that I may know Thy will and fulfil it. Guide me in the way of truth which Thou hast given in the Law; guide me in the observance of Thy precepts,

¹ Card. Bellarmine.

for they are true and just. Teach me lest I stray from the right way. Direct and teach me, for Thou art my Saviour; to Thee do I look for salvation; in Thee do I ever put my trust."

Verse 6.—To urge his petitions more effectively David reminds God, as it were, of the many favors and mercies shown in times past. The phrase, "which are of old" ("*from the beginning of the world*") clearly indicates that David is not speaking of favors granted to himself personally, but of those granted to the nation—to the chosen people of God.

"Remember, O Lord, Thy mercies in times past, when Thou didst choose the people for Thine own; when Thou didst bring them out of Egypt; when Thou didst protect them from all harm through long centuries."

Verse 7.—"Forgive me (*remember not*) the sins which I committed in my youth and the sins of later life that I have committed through inadvertence or thoughtlessness." The Hebrew has "transgressions" instead of "ignorance." Thus the meaning becomes: "Remember not the faults of my youth, into which thoughtlessness and lust have led me; nor the transgressions that I have committed in maturer and more thoughtful years. Regard not my sins, but in Thy mercy and goodness remember me"; or, as St. Augustine puts it: "Remember me not according to Thy anger of which I am worthy, but according to the merciful kindness that is worthy of Thee."

Some consider this verse as the words of David speaking in the name of the chosen people, and explain the sins of youth as the sins of the people at the beginning of the nation—the sins committed by

the fathers in Egypt and in the desert. The transgressions would then mean the sins which still prevail amongst the people.

Verses 8, 9.—“The Lord is good (*sweet*) and upright; He does not immediately destroy the sinner, but instructs him in the right way; and for the meek and humble He has a special care. He leads them in the path of justice, and teaches them the way that is pleasing to Him.”

A comparison with the Hebrew shows that “sweet” is to be taken in the sense of “good.”

“*To give a law*” means to instruct. Cf. *Ps.* xxvi. 11; *Ps.* cxviii. 33.

Verse 10.—To those who faithfully observe His covenant and its precepts God deals with mercy and fidelity. His ways are merciful because “*He will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (1 *Tim.* ii. 4). His dealings with mankind are truth, i.e., they continually give proof of His fidelity to all His promises.

Verse 11.—“That Thy mercy may be manifested and Thy name glorified, do Thou pardon my sins, for they are many.”

“*Sin*” is here used in a collective sense. In Hebrew: “*Pardon my iniquity for it is great.*”

Verses 12, 13.—“The God-fearing man shall be greatly blessed. He shall be guided by the Lord in the right way; he shall enjoy lasting prosperity, and his descendants shall inherit his blessings.”

The first blessing is that of divine guidance. God will instruct him in the way that is pleasing to Him, or, as the Hebrew may be rendered: “God will instruct him in the way that he should choose,”

The meaning is practically the same. "Among all the blessings which fall to the lot of him who fears God, the first place is given to this, that God raises him above the vacillation and hesitancy of human opinion."¹ In the New Law this instruction is provided for by an infallible Church.

"*His seed shall inherit the land*," i.e., his descendants shall never be deprived of his possessions. They shall always enjoy his happiness and prosperity. Some understand this as a reference to Palestine, the land that God promised to His chosen people. The meaning would be the same, viz.: "Through successive generations those who fear God shall dwell peacefully and securely in the land of promise."

The words of Christ, "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land*,"² seem to have reference to this verse. It should be noted, however, that earthly happiness promised in the Old Law as a reward for its faithful observance is replaced in the New Law by the happiness of heaven. The land mentioned by Christ in the Beatitude is the Land of Promise *par excellence*—the heavenly fatherland of which Canaan was but a figure.

Verse 14.—The God-fearing shall also enjoy familiarity with God, and He will make known to them His covenant, or law.

The Hebrew reads: "*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and His covenant doth He make known to them.*" The Septuagint reads: "*y'esodh*" (foundation) instead of "*sodh*" (familiarity, confidential communication), and rendered it: "*The Lord is the stay of them that fear Him: and His covenant is for their instruction.*" Or, it may be

¹ Delitzsch.

² Matt. v. 4.

rendered, "*His covenant is to instruct them,*" i.e., "He has bound Himself by covenant."

Verse 15.—The Psalmist has shown that every perfect gift is from above coming down from God; therefore he turns to Him for deliverance from the machinations of his enemies. "To Thee, O Lord, do I lift my eyes in hope; to Thee do I look for help; I have confidence that Thou wilt deliver me from all dangers."

Verses 16, 17.—"Look upon me with favor and be gracious to me, for I am deserted and alone; I am poor and afflicted; the sorrows of my heart are multiplied. Do Thou deliver me from my distress."

The Hebrew may also be rendered: "*The straits of my heart do Thou enlarge and bring me out of my distress,*" i.e., "Quiet my inward sorrows (sorrows of the heart) and deliver me from external difficulties (necessities)."

Verses 18, 19.—"See my affliction and my misery and forgive me my sins lest they stand in the way of my being heard. Mark my enemies, how great their number, and with what hatred they persecute me."

Verses 20, 21.—"My enemies are many and they persecute me with cruel hatred; therefore, I beseech Thee, guard my life and deliver me from danger. I have hoped in Thee; let me not be put to shame;" or, "I have hoped in Thee, I know that my hopes shall not be vain. Let integrity and uprightness merit Thy aid, for I look to Thee for my defence."

The Septuagint and Vulgate read: "*The innocent and upright adhere to me.*" This seems to contradict verse 16, where the Psalmist complains of being alone, deserted by all. St. Jerome renders it: "*Single-mindedness and fair dealing shall preserve*

me." (Cf. 3 Kings ix. 4.) "*And if thou wilt walk before Me . . . in simplicity of heart and in uprightness . . . I will establish the throne of thy kingdom over Israel forever.*"

Verse 22.—"Deliver us (the people of Israel), from all our tribulations." David prayed not for himself alone, but in the name of the people (cf. verse 6); therefore in this last verse he begs God to deliver the nation from all peril. Many consider this verse a later addition adapting the psalm to liturgical usage.

PSALMUS XXV

(HEB. XXVI)

- 1 In finem, Psalmus David.
 Judica me, Domine, quoniam
 ego in innocentia mea
 ingressus sum:
 et in Domino sperans non
 infirmabor.
- 2 Proba me, Domine, et tenta
 me;
 ure renes meos et cor meum.
- 3 Quoniam misericordia tua
 ante oculos meos est,
 et complacui in veritate tua.
- 4 Non sedi cum concilio vani-
 tatis,
 et cum iniqua gerentibus
 non introibo.
- 5 Odivi ecclesiam malignan-
 tium,
 et cum impiis non sedebo.
- 6 Lavabo inter innocentes
 manus meas:
 et circumdabo altare tuum,
 Domine.
- 7 Ut audiam vocem laudis,
 et enarrem universa mirabi-
 lia tua.
- 8 Domine, dilexi decorem do-
 mus tuæ,

PSALM XXV

(HEB. XXVI)

- 1 Unto the end, a psalm for
 David.
 Judge me, O Lord, for I
 have walked in my inno-
 cence:
 and I have put my trust in
 the Lord, and shall not be
 weakened.
- 2 Prove me, O Lord, and try
 me;
 burn my reins and my
 heart.
- 3 For thy mercy is before my
 eyes;
 and I am well pleased with
 thy truth,
- 4 I have not sat with the
 council of vanity:
 neither will I go in with the
 doers of unjust things.
- 5 I have hated the assembly
 of the magignant;
 and with the wicked I will
 not sit.
- 6 I will wash my hands among
 the innocent;
 and will compass thy altar,
 O Lord:
- 7 That I may hear the voice
 of thy praise:
 and tell of all thy wondrous
 works.
- 8 I have loved, O Lord, the
 beauty of thy house;

et locum habitationis gloriæ tuæ.	and the place where thy glory dwelleth.
9 Ne perdas cum impiis, Deus, animam meam. Et cum viris sanguinum vitam meam;	9 Take not away my soul, O God, with the wicked: nor my life with bloody men:
10 In quorum manibus iniquitates sunt: dextera eorum repleta est muneribus.	10 In whose hands are iniquities: their right hand is filled with gifts.
11 Ego autem in innocentia mea ingressus sum; redime me, et miserere mei.	11 But as for me, I have walked in my innocence: redeem me, and have mercy on me.
12 Pes meus stetit in directo; In ecclesiis benedicam te Domine.	12 My foot hath stood in the direct way: in the churches I will bless thee, O Lord.

PSALM XXV

THALHOFER assigns this psalm to the time of Saul's persecution. The hypocrisy and bribery mentioned in verses 4 and 10 agree well with the description of Absalom's followers. (Cf. 2 Kings xv.) Verse 8 seems to express a longing for the house of God, intimating that David was absent from Jerusalem at the time. It also recalls the words of David to Sadoc: "*Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find grace in the sight of the Lord He will bring me again, and He will shew me it and His tabernacle*" (2 Kings xv. 25).

Synopsis.—Surrounded by difficulties and dangers, David beseeches God to take up his cause, for he is upright and therefore worthy of divine aid (1). He is pure in thought and desire (2, 3), and has not consorted with sinners (4, 5). On the con-

trary, he has joined with the pious in the worship of God (6-8). He begs God not to involve him in the fate of the wicked (9, 10), but to deliver him from all danger because of his righteousness (11, 12).

Verse 1.—“ Judge favorably in my regard; take up my cause and defend my rights, for I have walked in the path of righteousness and Thou art wont to aid and defend the upright of heart.” Or, it may be interpreted: “ Defend me, for I have acted with integrity and have given no cause for opposition or enmity.”

“ I put my trust in the Lord; therefore I shall not be overcome.” In Hebrew: “ *In the Lord have I trusted without wavering.*”

Verses 2, 3.—David protests his righteousness and appeals to God’s searching examination.¹ “ Examine me, O Lord; try my reins² and my heart³ as metals are tried by fire. I have nothing to fear. Relying upon Thy loving-kindness and thy faithfulness, I have ever walked in the path of justice.” In Hebrew: “ *Thy loving-kindness is before my eyes and I walk in Thy truth.*”

The Hebrew “ *emeth*,” “ truth,” means rather faithfulness to promises or determinations. Some take “ *mercy* ” and “ *truth* ” in the sense of law. The meaning then becomes: “ I have always observed Thy law.”

Verses 4, 5.—The Psalmist further declares his uprightness. “ I have not consorted with the wicked; I have had no dealings with the unjust (Heb., *hypocrites*); I loathe their company and diligently

¹ Cf. Ps. xvi. 3.

³ Seat of the affections.

² Seat of the passions.

avoid them. I have no part in their evil doings." Cf. *Ps.* i. 1.

Verses 6-8.—"I have not associated with the wicked. On the contrary, I have washed my hands in token of innocence and joined with those who surround Thy altar for worship. There I listened to Thy praises and related in song Thy wondrous works—the favors and blessings heaped upon me and upon Thy people. I love the beauty (*Sept. becoming appearance*) of Thy house, the dwelling-place of Thy glory."

"To wash the hands among the innocent" (*Heb. in my innocence*) probably has reference to the custom mentioned in *Deut.* xxi. 6. "*And the ancients of that city shall come to the person slain and shall wash their hands over the heifer that was killed in the valley, and shall say: Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it.*" Cf. *Matt.* xxvii. 24. "*Pilate taking water washed his hands before the people saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man.*" David thus protests his innocence with a figure that is very natural here in connection with the mention of sacrifice, because the priests were commanded to wash their hands in preparation for sacrifice (*Ex.* xxx. 19).

"*I will compass Thy altar.*" It seems probable that choirs of singers marched around the altar in procession with music and song while sacrifices were being offered. David joined himself in the procession and there heard them singing the praises of God; or as the Hebrew has it: "*He caused the voice of praise to be heard,*" i.e., he sang with the choirs, and the burden of the song was the wondrous works of God. The choir of worshipers in the house of God is

opposed to the assembly of the wicked (4). David hated the wicked and took no part in their assemblies, but he gladly joined himself with the pious worshipers in the house of God. He loved to be present before the Tabernacle—the abode of God's glory, the place of His visible manifestation amongst His people. (*Lev. xvi. 2*). "*I will appear in a cloud over the oracle.*"

In Hebrew verse 8 reads: "*O Lord, I love the habitation of Thy house; and the dwelling-place of Thy glory.*"

Those who assign this psalm to a time when David was in exile from Jerusalem interpret verses 6-8 as a longing to return and take part in the worship of God. David loves the house of the Lord and longs to return to it. Then will he wash his hands and join in the worship of God: with the others he will march around the altar and sing the praises of the Lord.

Verses 9, 10.—David now makes the petition for which the foregoing is but a preparation, "O God, let me not be involved in the fate that awaits the wicked—the murderer, the unjust oppressor—whose hands are full of cunning and deceit; whose right hand, that should uphold justice, is accursed with bribery to the condemnation of the innocent."¹

Verses 11, 12.—"I am far removed from such as these, for I walk in uprightness and integrity. Therefore do Thou be gracious to me and deliver me from the hands of my enemies and from the punishment that awaits them." "*Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in Thee, O Lord.*" (*Ps. iv. 24*.)

¹ Delitzsch.

Prayer gives way to joyous thanksgiving because of the certainty of deliverance. Even now he feels that he is delivered from all danger. "My foot stands on a level place," i.e., in a place of security, "and I will sing Thy praises in the assemblies of the people."

PSALMUS XXVI

HEB. (XXVII)

- 1 Psalmus David, priusquam
lineretur.
Dominus illuminatio mea et
salus mea;
quem timebo?
Dominus protector vitæ
meæ,
a quo trepidabo?
- 2 Dum appropiant super me
nocentes,
ut edant carnes meas:
Qui tribulant me inimici
mei, ipsi infirmati sunt et
ceciderunt.
- 3 Si consistant adversum me
castra,

non timebit cor meum.
Si exurgat adversum me
prælium,
in hoc ego sperabo.
- 4 Unam petii a Domino,
hanc requiram,
ut inhabitem in domo
Domini
omnibus diebus vitæ meæ,
Ut videam voluptatem
Domini,
et visitem templum ejus.
- 5 Quoniam abscondit me in
tabernaculo suo;

PSALM XXVI

HEB. (XXVII)

- 1 A psalm for David before
he was anointed.
The Lord is my light and
my salvation,
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the protector
of my life:
of whom shall I be afraid?
- 2 Whilst the wicked draw
near against me,
to eat my flesh.
My enemies that trouble me,
have themselves been
weakened, and have
fallen.
- 3 If armies in camp should
stand together against
me,
my heart shall not fear.
If a battle should rise up
against me,
in this will I be confident.
- 4 One thing I have asked of
the Lord,
this will I seek after;
that I may dwell in the
house of the Lord
all the days of my life.
That I may see the delight
of the Lord,
and may visit his temple.
- 5 For he hath hidden me in
his tabernacle;

- In die malorum protexit me
in abscondito tabernaculi
sui.
- 6 In petra exaltavit me,
et nunc exaltavit caput
meum super inimicos
meos.
Circuivi, et immolavi in
tabernaculo ejus hostiam
vociferationis;
- cantabo, et psalmum dicam
Domino.
- 7 Exaudi, Domine, vocem me-
am, qua clamavi ad te:
- miserere mei, et exaudi me.
- 8 Tibi dixit cor meum, ex-
quisivit te facies mea;
faciem tuam, Domine, re-
quiram.
- 9 Ne avertas faciem tuam a
me;
ne declines in ira a servo tuo.
- Adjutor meus esto; ne dere-
linquas me,
neque despicias me, Deus
salutaris meus.
- 10 Quoniam pater meus et
mater mea dereliquerunt
me;
Dominus autem assumpsit
me.
- 11 Legem pone mihi, Domine,
in via tua,
et dirige me in semitam
rectam, propter inimicos
meos.
- 12 Ne tradideris me in animas
tribulantium me,
- in the day of evils, he hath
protected me in the secret
place of his tabernacle.
- 6 He hath exalted me upon
a rock:
and now he hath lifted up my
head above my enemies.
I have gone round, and
have offered up in his
tabernacle a sacrifice of
jubilation:
I will sing, and recite a
psalm to the Lord.
- 7 Hear, O Lord, my voice,
with which I have cried
to thee:
have mercy on me and hear
me.
- 8 My heart hath said to thee:
My face hath sought thee:
thy face, O Lord, will I still
seek.
- 9 Turn not away thy face from
me;
decline not in thy wrath
from thy servant.
Be thou my helper, forsake
me not;
do not thou despise me, O
God my Saviour.
- 10 For my father and my
mother have left me:
but the Lord hath taken me
up.
- 11 Set me, O Lord, a law in thy
way,
and guide me in the right
path, because of my ene-
mies.
- 12 Deliver me not over to the
will of them that trouble
me;

- | | |
|--|--|
| quoniam insurrexerunt in
me testes iniqui,
et mentita est iniquitas sibi. | for unjust witnesses have
risen up against me;
and iniquity hath lied to
itself. |
| 13 Credo videre bona Domini
in terra viventium. | 13 I believe to see the good
things of the Lord
in the land of the living. |
| 14 Expecta Dominum, viriliter
age,
et confortetur cor tuum, et
sustine Dominum. | 14 Expect the Lord, do man-
fully,
and let thy heart take
courage, and wait thou
for the Lord. |

PSALM XXVI

Synopsis.—"God is my protector, I have nothing to fear (1-3). Gladly would I spend my days near the Tabernacle, under God's protecting care (4-6). Hear my prayers, O Lord, and leave me not without Thy help (7-10). Teach me Thy ways (11-12). I hope in Thee (13)." A chorus: "Hope in God! (14)."

The words of the title, "*before he was anointed*" are taken from the Septuagint. They are wanting in the Hebrew text and in St. Jerome's translation. Theodoret notes that they were not found in Origen's Hexapla.

Verse 1.—"Thou, O Lord, art my light dispelling the darkness of adversity. Thou art my protector and my deliverer. I need not fear." Cf. *Rom.* viii. 31. "*If God be for us, who is against us?*"

Prosperity and divine favor are frequently represented under the figure of light. Cf. *Ps.* xvii. 29. This is the only instance where God is called "*My light*." Cf. *John* i. 9-xii. 46. "*That was the true light.*" "*I am come a light into the world.*"

Verse 2.—“ When my enemies rushed in like wild beasts to devour me, they themselves were deprived of all power and fell before me.” According to the Hebrew: “ *They themselves stumbled and fell,*” i.e., “ they stumbled against an unexpected power and fell; they were overcome by the mighty hand of God, who is my light and the protector of my life.”

Verse 3.—“ Should an enemy encamp against me I would have no fear. If an army should be drawn up before me in battle array, yet would I trust in Thy protection.” Cf. Ps. iii. 7. “ *I will not fear thousands of the people surrounding me.*”

Some infer from this and the following verses that David was absent from Jerusalem and threatened by surrounding foes as at the time of Absalom’s rebellion.

Verses 4, 5.—The Psalmist desires to dwell in the house of the Lord and enjoy the favor of His presence there manifested in the Holy of Holies. He wishes to frequent the Tabernacle and take part in the worship of God (or, as the Hebrew may be rendered, “ *and meditate in His temple*”). In the day of peril, God protects His friends—those who piously frequent His house. He shields them from harm like a man secreting a fugitive in the recesses of his dwelling.

Construed in the present tense, “ *Hides and protects me*” states a general fact—God’s usual mode of dealing with His people. If the past tense is retained, “ *Hid and protected me*” probably refers to some experience in the life of David.

Verse 6.—“ The Lord hid me in His dwelling and set me in a place of safety, as it were upon a high rock (possibly an allusion to the hill of the Temple)

and made me to triumph over my enemies. Therefore will I offer joyful sacrifices of thanksgiving."

In the Hebrew text this verse reads somewhat differently. "*He exalteth me upon a rock*" is joined to verse 5. Verse 6 reads: "*Thus then shall my head be exalted above mine enemies round about me, and I will offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of thankful joy. I will sing and play the harp to the Lord.*"

If we retain the reading of the Vulgate, "*to go round*" probably has the same meaning as "*to compass the altar*," in Ps. xxv. 6.

"*Sacrifices of jubilation*" literally mean sacrifices that were accompanied by the sounding of trumpets. Cf. Num. x. 10. "*You shall sound the trumpets over the holocausts and the sacrifices of peace offerings.*" It is improbable that private sacrifices were accompanied with the sounding of trumpets. For this reason the word is usually rendered "*joyful sacrifices of thanksgiving*" accompanied by singing and the playing of harps.

The first part of the verse may be construed in the past or present as in verse 5. The second part is more properly construed in the future tense corresponding to "*I will sing.*"

Verses 7, 8.—In this part of the psalm David prays God to continue His favor and protection as in the past. "Hear me, O Lord, when I cry aloud to Thee saying: Be gracious unto me and hear me. I (my heart) have said to Thee: 'My face has earnestly sought after Thee.' To Thee do I turn my eyes in supplication and in hope of Thine aid. I seek Thy favor, and Thy approbation (Thy face)."

In Hebrew verse 8 is difficult to understand. "*To Thee saith my heart: seek ye My face. This,*

Thy face, O Lord, will I seek." Hupfeld explains it thus: "Thou hast exhorted us saying 'Seek ye my face! therefore do I seek it.'"

Verses 9, 10.—David earnestly and repeatedly begs God not to desert him for He is his only stay. "Assist me, O Lord, and delay not, for I am deserted by all—even my nearest friends; yet will I not lose hope, for Thou, O Lord, wilt come to my aid." Van Steenkiste thus explains verse 10. Others however, take it as a conditional sentence.

"Though my father and my mother should desert me, yet wouldst Thou take me up (adopt me as Thine own)." (Cf. *Is.* xlix. 15.) "*Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee.*"

Verse 11.—That he may be worthy of divine aid, David asks to be directed in the way that is pleasing to God. "Teach me Thy way (set me a law), O Lord, and direct me into the right path, that my enemies may have no occasion to rejoice at my downfall." Or, as some interpreters understand it, "Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and direct me in a path of security, because my enemies lie in wait for me." Cf. *Ps.* v. 9.

Verse 12.—Wily enemies and calumniators hound the Psalmist at every turn. Gladly would they see their evil designs realized; they would rejoice at his downfall. With confidence David turns to God for assistance. "Give me not over to the desires of my persecutors. Calumniators have risen up against me, but they will accomplish nothing save their own defeat. Their calumnies shall turn to their own

harm. They (the wicked; iniquity) have lied to their own injury (to themselves)."

The Hebrew reads: "*For false witnesses are risen up against me and such as breathe out violence.*"

Verse 13.—"Even when surrounded by enemies and calumniators, I feel confident that I shall not succumb to their power. Here on earth, in the land of the living, I shall continue to enjoy the benefits of God's mercy and goodness."

The Hebrew reads: "*Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*" This needs something to complete the sense. M'Swiney supplies thus: "I should have lost all hope unless I had believed it would be given me to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

Verse 14.—The psalm closes with a general exhortation to trust in God. Look to God for help; act with fortitude; take courage and hope in God.

PSALMUS XXVII

(HEB. XXVIII)

- 1 Psalmus ipsi David.
Ad te, Domine, clamabo,

Deus meus, ne sileas a me:

ne quando taceas a me, et
assimilabor descendentibus
in lacum.
- 2 Exaudi, Domine, vocem deprecationis meæ, dum oro
ad te,
dum extollo manus meas ad
templum sanctum tuum.
- 3 Ne simul trahas me cum
peccatoribus,
et cum operantibus iniquitatem
ne perdas me;
Qui loquuntur pacem cum
proximo suo,
mala autem in cordibus
eorum.
- 4 Da illis secundum opera
eorum,
et secundum nequitiam adinventionum
ipsorum.
Secundum opera manuum
eorum tribue illis,

redde retributionem eorum
ipsis.
- 5 Quoniam non intellexerunt
opera Domini

PSALM XXVII

(HEB. XXVIII)

- 1 A psalm for David himself.
Unto thee will I cry, O
Lord:
O my God, be not thou
silent to me:
lest if thou be silent to me,
I become like them that
go down down into the
pit.
- 2 Hear, O Lord, the voice of
my supplication, when I
pray to thee;
when I lift up my hands to
thy holy temple.
- 3 Draw me not away together
with the wicked;
and with the workers of
iniquity destroy me not:
Who speak peace with their
neighbor,
but evils are in their
hearts.
- 4 Give them according to their
works,
and according to the wickedness
of their inventions.
According to the works of
their hands give thou to
them:
render to them their reward.
- 5 Because they have not understood
the works of the
Lord,

et in opera manuum ejus; destrues illos, et non ædificabis eos.	and the operations of his hands: thou shalt destroy them, and shalt not build them up.
6 Benedictus Dominus, quoniam exaudivit vocem deprecationis meæ.	6 Blessed be the Lord, for he hath heard the voice of my supplication.
7 Dominus adjutor meus et protector meus; in ipso speravit cor meum, et adjutus sum.	7 The Lord is my helper and my protector: in him hath my heart con- fided, and I have been helped.
Et refluoruit caro mea, et ex voluntate mea con- fitebor ei.	And my flesh hath flourished again, and with my will I will give praise to him.
8 Dominus fortitudo plebis sue, et protector salvationum christi sui est.	8 The Lord is the strength of his people, and the protector of the sal- vation of his anointed.
9 Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine, et benedic hereditati tuæ; et rege eos, et extolle illos usque in æternum.	9 Save, O Lord, thy people, and bless thy inheritance: and rule them and exalt them for ever.

PSALM XXVII

THIS psalm belongs to a time of disturbance when the life of the king was in danger. It agrees well with the condition of affairs during Absalom's revolt.

Synopsis.—David earnestly beseeches deliverance from some danger (1-2). He begs God not to include him among the wicked (3), for whose evil works he implores just punishment (4-5). He gives thanks for deliverance (6-8), and prays for the people (9). In the Hebrew text the title is simply "*to David.*"

Verses 1, 2.—"In my distress I cry to Thee, O

Lord. Reject not my petition; turn not away in silence, O my God (Heb. "*my rock*"), lest I succumb to the dangers that surround me, and go down in death (*pit—sheol*). Hear my supplication when I cry aloud to Thee; when I lift up my hands (gesture of supplication) toward the Holy of Holies (holy temple—innermost sanctuary)."

Verse 3.—"May the fate of the wicked be far from me. Draw me not down to destruction with my foes, the workers of iniquity, who pretend friendship but cherish hatred and malice in their hearts." Cf. Ps. xxv. 9. "*To speak peace*" probably has reference to the usual mode of salutation: "*Peace to thee.*"

Verse 4.—"Do Thou punish these wicked ones according to their works and evil designs. Give them the just reward of their actions." Cf. Is. ii. 11. "*Woe to the wicked unto evil; for the reward of his hands shall be given him.*"

Verse 5.—They are deserving of punishment because they do not wish to acknowledge the works of God nor His omnipotence (works of His hands). (Cf. Is. v. 12.) "*The work of the Lord you regard not, nor do you consider the works of His hands.*"

They are devoid of all piety, and the Psalmist is confident that God will completely destroy them—tear them down and not build them up. If the psalm belongs to the time of Absalom's revolt, this last phrase may be a reference to the promise made to David (2 Kings vii. 27) that "*God would build him a house,*" i.e., grant perpetual continuance to his kingship. The followers of Absalom are in rebellion against this divine appointment. Hence they

shall experience the very reverse of the divine promise. The Lord will pull them down and not build them up. He will destroy this dynasty set up in opposition to God.¹ In the Latin text of verse 5 there should be a colon, or period, after the words "*opera manuum ejus*," and "*in*" should be omitted.

Verses 6-8.—David is perfectly confident that the desired aid will be given, and he now gives thanks to God as if he were already delivered from danger. The past tense may also be explained by supposing that the psalm was composed after the desired assistance had been given. "Praised be God, for He hath heard my prayer. He is my helper and my protector." (Heb. "*My strength and my shield*.") "I trusted to Him for help and straightway it was given me, and my bodily frame, wasted with sorrow and trouble, has received new strength. From my heart will I praise the Lord. He is the strength of His people and their defender against all enemies. He is the protector that delivers me, His appointed king, from all danger."

Instead of "*And my flesh hath flourished again, and with my will I will give praise to Him*," the Hebrew text has: "*Therefore my heart exulteth, and with my song do I praise Him*."

Verse 9.—In this last verse, which was probably used as a chorus, David prays for the people: "Save and bless the people—Thine inheritance. Rule them and lift them up over their enemies for ever;" or, as the Hebrew reads: "*Be to them as a shepherd and lift them up*," i.e., carry them on the

¹ Delitzsch.

shoulder as a shepherd carries the lambs of the flock. Cf. *Deut.* i. 31. "*And in the wilderness (as thou hast seen) the Lord thy God hath carried thee, as a man is wont to carry his little son, all the way that you have come.*"

PSALMUS XXVIII

(HEB. XXIX)

1 Psalmus David. In consummatione tabernaculi.

Afferte Domino, filii Dei,
afferte Domino filios arietum.

2 Afferte Domino gloriam et honorem;
afferte Domino gloriam nomini ejus;
adorate Dominum in atrio sancto ejus.

3 Vox Domini super aquas;
Deus majestatis intonuit;
Dominus super aquas multas.

4 Vox Domini in virtute;
vox Domini in magnificentia.

5 Vox Domini confringentis cedros,
et confringet Dominus cedros Libani.

6 Et comminuet eas tamquam vitulum Libani:

et dilectus quemadmodum filius unicornium.

7 Vox Domini intercidentis flammam ignis.

PSALM XXVIII

(HEB. XXIX)

1 A psalm for David, at the finishing of the tabernacle.

Bring to the Lord, O ye children of God:
bring to the Lord the offspring of rams.

2 Bring to the Lord glory and honor:
bring to the Lord glory to his name:
adore ye the Lord in his holy court.

3 The voice of the Lord is upon the waters;
the God of majesty hath thundered,
The Lord is upon many waters.

4 The voice of the Lord is in power;
the voice of the Lord in magnificence.

5 The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars:
yea, the Lord shall break the cedars of Libanus.

6 And shall reduce them to pieces, as a calf of Libanus,
and as the beloved son of unicorns.

7 The voice of the Lord divideth the flame of fire:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>8 Vox Domini concutientis
desertum,
et commovebit Dominus
desertum Cades.</p> <p>9 Vox Domini præparantis
cervos,
et revelabit condensa;</p> <p>et in templo ejus omnes
dicent gloriam.</p> <p>10 Dominus diluvium inhabi-
tare facit:
et sedebit Dominus rex in
æternum.</p> <p>11 Dominus virtutem populo
suo dabit;
Dominus benedicet populo
suo in pace.</p> | <p>8 The voice of the Lord shak-
eth the desert:
and the Lord shall shake
the desert of Cades.</p> <p>9 The voice of the Lord præ-
pareth the stags:
and he will discover the
thick woods:
and in his temple all shall
speak his glory.</p> <p>10 The Lord maketh the flood
to dwell:
and the Lord shall sit king
for ever.</p> <p>11 The Lord will give strength
to his people:
the Lord will bless his
people with peace.</p> |
|---|---|

PSALM XXVIII

Synopsis.—In this psalm David calls upon the angelic choirs to praise and glorify God (1, 2), whose power and majesty are revealed in the storm (3–10). The rumbling thunders are heard in the distance (3, 4). The storm breaks forth and the mountains are shaken by its fury (5–7). Passing over Palestine the storm spends itself in the deserts of Arabia (8–10). A chorus (11) has been added for liturgical purposes.

“*At the finishing*” (Gr. “*going out*”) “*of the tabernacle*” is not found in the Hebrew text nor in St. Jerome’s translation. It seems that it was also wanting in Origen’s Hexapla. Thalhofer and Delitzsch take it as an indication that the psalm was to be sung on the last day (Gr. “*going out*”) of the feast of Tabernacles.

Verses 1, 2.—David calls upon the angels to

glorify God. "Render (*bring*) to the Lord glory and honor. Render to Him the glory due to His name. Bow down before Him in adoration, in His holy court."

In the Hebrew text the first verse has but one phrase. The Old Itala version translated it: "*Render to the Lord, O ye sons of God.*" St. Jerome rendered it: "*Bring to the Lord sons of rams*" (i.e., lambs). The Septuagint and Vulgate have both readings. One or the other is evidently a gloss.

According to St. Jerome's version, David invites the faithful to worship God in the tabernacle with sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. Most authors accept the other reading and interpret it of the angels as noted above. The "*holy court*," then, refers to heaven. Instead of "*in His holy court*" the present Hebrew text reads "*in holy attire*," i.e., in festive garments.

Verses 3, 4.—The power and majesty of God are revealed by the storms that arise in the west, the region of the Mediterranean, and sweep eastward over the country. The Psalmist describes the rise and progress of such a storm. The rumblings of distant thunders are heard in the west, where the storm is gathering in the region of the sea (over many, i.e., great waters). As the storm approaches the thunders reverberate with increasing intensity and strike fear into the hearts of all—announcing as it were the terrible sublimity of God's power. The voice ¹ of the Lord is in power and magnificence.

¹ Delitzsch calls this the "Psalm of Seven Thunders" because thunder is mentioned seven times as the voice of God. Cf. *Apoc.* x. 3. "And when he had cried seven thunders uttered their voices."

Some interpreters explain "*great waters*" as a reference to the Mediterranean Sea, whence the storms take their rise; others take it to mean the waters of the storm clouds in which the lightnings play and the thunders roll.

Verses 5-7.—The storm breaks forth in its fury on the mountains, the tall cedars are blasted and riven by the thunderbolts, and the fragments are scattered about upon the ground. The lightnings play about the mountain peaks like forked tongues of fire. This is the general meaning of the passage, although verse 6 in the Septuagint and Vulgate gives no satisfactory meaning. The Hebrew reads: "*And He maketh them to skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young antelope.*" The storm is described as shaking the very mountains and by a bold figure (such as is common to Oriental peoples) they are compared to a calf skipping about in play.

"Sirion" is the Sidonian name for Mount Hermon. Cf. *Deut.* iii. 9. Verse 7 evidently refers to the forked lightnings. "*The voice of the Lord divideth the flame,*" or, as Delitzsch renders it: "*The voice of Yahveh flameth forth quivering fire.*"

Verses 8, 9.—The storm passes over Palestine toward the south and spends its fury in the desert of Cades. The thunders shake the desert of Cades and make the hinds to bring forth prematurely on account of fright. The storm strips the forests bare.

It seems rather unexpected to find trees mentioned here since they were already referred to in verses 5-6. After the mention of hinds we would naturally expect to find mention of some other animal. For this reason some authors give an emended reading by substituting "*jehaloth*" (a chamois or wild

goat) for the unusual form "*jeharoth*" (a wood or forest). The voice of the Lord made the hinds to bring forth and the wild goats to flee.

Others emend the reading by taking "*ajjaloth*" as the plural of "*allah*" (an oak) instead of "*ajjalah*" (a hind). The voice of the Lord twists the oaks and strips the forests.

Verse 9.—As the power and majesty of God is being revealed on earth, the angels in heaven are singing His praises as they were admonished to do, verses 1, 2. If "*sons of God*" in verse 1 means the faithful on earth, the temple mentioned here is the tabernacle.

Verse 10.—The meaning seems to be that God, who sat upon His throne as supreme Lord at the time of the flood, is still enthroned, as this present storm clearly proves, and will continue to rule as King for ever.

Verse 11.—The Lord has a people whom He endows with a share of His own might and blesses with peace whilst the tempests of His wrath burst over their foes. The psalm opens with chants of praise by the angelic choirs in heaven, and closes with victory and peace for the chosen people on earth. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."

PSALMUS XXIX

(HEB. XXX)

- 1 Psalmus cantici, in dedicatione domus David.
- 2 Exaltabo te, Domine, quoniam suscepisti me, nec delectasti inimicos meos super me.
- 3 Dominus Deus meus, clamavi ad te, et sanasti me.
- 4 Domine, eduxisti ab inferno animam meam; salvasti me a descendentibus in lacum.
- 5 Psallite Domino, sancti ejus, et confitemini memorie sanctitatis ejus.
- 6 Quoniam ira in indignatione ejus, et vita in voluntate ejus. Ad vespertinum demorabitur fletus, et ad matutinum lætitia.
- 7 Ego autem dixi in abundantia mea; Non movebor in æternum.
- 8 Domine, in voluntate tua prestitisti decori meo virtutem. Avertisti faciem tuam a me, et factus sum conturbatus.

PSALM XXIX

(HEB. XXX)

- 1 A psalm of a canticle, at the dedication of David's house.
- 2 I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast upheld me: and hast not made my enemies to rejoice over me.
- 3 O Lord my God, I have cried to thee, and thou hast healed me.
- 4 Thou hast brought forth, O Lord, my soul from hell: thou hast saved me from them that go down into the pit.
- 5 Sing to the Lord, O ye saints: and give praise to the memory of his holiness.
- 6 For wrath is in his indignation; and life in his good will. In the evening weeping shall have place, and in the morning gladness.
- 7 And in my abundance I said: I shall never be moved.
- 8 O Lord, in thy favor, thou gavest strength to my beauty. Thou turnedst away thy face from me, and I became troubled.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 9 Ad te, Domine, clamabo,
et ad Deum meum deprecabor. | 9 To thee, O Lord, will I cry:
and I will make supplication to my God. |
| 10 Quæ utilitas in sanguine meo,
dum descendo in corruptionem?
Numquid confitebitur tibi pulvis,
aut annuntiabit veritatem tuam? | 10 What profit is there in my blood,
whilst I go down to corruption?
Shall dust confess to thee,
or declare thy truth? |
| 11 Audiuit Dominus, et misertus est mei;
Dominus factus est adjutor meus. | 11 The Lord hath heard, and hath had mercy on me:
the Lord became my helper. |
| 12 Convertisti planctum meum in gaudium mihi;
Conscidisti saccum meum,
et circumdedisti me lætitia: | 12 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into joy;
thou hast cut my sackcloth,
and hast compassed me with gladness: |
| 13 Ut cantet tibi gloria mea, et non compungar.

Domine Deus meus, in æternum confitebor tibi. | 13 To the end that my glory may sing to thee, and I may not regret:
O Lord my God, I will give praise to thee for ever. |

PSALM XXIX

Synopsis.—David thanks God for deliverance from some pressing danger (2–4). He calls upon the faithful to praise God because His anger is shortlived but “*His mercy endureth forever*” (5, 6). The Psalmist’s experience in this regard—he rashly trusted in his own prosperity (7, 8a), and lost the divine favor (8b), but the anger of God soon gave way to mercy. David prayed for deliverance (9, 10) and was heard (11–13).

Verse 1.—In Hebrew “*David*” is in the dative case, indicating authorship as in the preceding psalms. Several Mss. of the Septuagint also have the dative

case. Hence the title should read: "*A Psalm of David. A song for the dedication of the house.*" It is not known what dedication is referred to by this title. Some think it refers to the dedication of the site of the future Temple. (Cf. *2 Kings* xxiv; *1 Paral.* xxi. 18 et seq.) Others think it refers to the dedication of David's royal palace. We learn from *Deut.* xx. 5 that it was the custom to dedicate new houses. Some even hold that the psalm was written by David in anticipation of the dedication of the Temple to be built by Solomon. It may be simply an indication of the liturgical use of this psalm for the feast of the dedication instituted by Judas Machabeus (*1 Mach.* iv. 52 et seq.) and mentioned by St. John (x. 22).

Verses 2-4.—David gives thanks to God for deliverance from some imminent danger that threatened his very life. Verse 3 seems to indicate that it was a serious sickness.

"I praise and thank Thee because Thou hast delivered me from danger and didst not give my enemies a chance to rejoice at my death. I cried to Thee in my troubles and Thou didst heal me of my sickness (or, didst deliver me from distress). O Lord, Thou hast snatched me from the very jaws of death. Thou hast delivered me from amongst those that go down in death. In Hebrew: "*Thou hast revived me that I should not go down to the grave.*"

Verses 5, 6.—Due thanks are to be rendered to God for His goodness and mercy in delivering the Psalmist from danger. "Sing the praises of the Lord, ye pious ones. Celebrate the memory of His goodness (or, the memories of His holiness; His

name ¹) for His wrath endureth but a moment, His mercy for ever. Sorrow may come as our guest in the evening, but at morn we wake to find joy in its stead, for so does the anger of God turn to favor and pardon." This is according to the Hebrew, in which verse 6 reads: "*For His anger endureth but for a moment, His favor for a life long. At eventide weeping cometh in for the night—and in the morning cometh a shout of joy.*"

The reading of the Septuagint and Vulgate gives no meaning appropriate to the context.

Verses 7, 8.—David gives his own experience to show how the anger of God gives way to mercy and pardon. Being led away with prosperity ² the Psalmist had foolishly persuaded himself that he would ever be prosperous in all his affairs, because God had deigned to grant strength and stability to his flourishing condition. The day of adversity came; it was a humbling chastisement. God turned from him and he was troubled and distressed. In Hebrew verse 8 reads: "*O Lord, by Thy favor hadst Thou made my mountain to stand strong,*" etc.; i.e., "Thou hadst firmly established my kingdom." Mt. Sion was the emblem of David's kingdom.

Verses 9, 10.—"In my distress and danger, I turned ³ to God in supplication. I said: What profit wilt Thou find in my death, for the dust of the grave will not praise Thee nor declare Thy faithfulness." As in *Psalm vi* David prays for de-

¹ "This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." (Ex. iii. 15.)

² Cf. Deut. viii. 11-18.

³ Past tense instead of future.

liverance that he may further promote the worship of God on earth. Cf. *Ps.* vi. 6.

Verses 11, 12.—“The Lord heard my prayer and showed mercy toward me. He straightway became my helper. He turned my sorrow into joy; He stripped me of the sackcloth of sorrow and mourning, and clothed me with joy.”

In Hebrew verse 11 continues the supplication of verse 10: “*Hear, O Lord, and be merciful unto me. O Lord, be Thou my helper.*” Verse 12 gives the result of this prayer: “*Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing, Thou hast put off my sackcloth and didst gird me with joy.*”

Verse 13.—“After I had been humbled by affliction, Thou didst turn my sorrow into joy that I might sing Thy praise and never grow weary therein. My Lord and My God, I shall praise Thee for ever!”

The Hebrew text has “*and not be silent*” instead of “*and I may not regret.*”

Some interpreters hold that David speaks in the name of the people in this psalm. Verses 3, 4, then, refer to some calamity threatening the destruction of the nation, and in verse 5 David calls upon the people to give thanks to God for deliverance.

PSALMUS XXX

(HEB. XXXI)

- 1 In finem, Psalmus David,
pro extasi.
- 2 In te, Domine, speravi,

non confundar in æternum:
in iustitia tua libera me.
- 3 Inclina ad me aurem tuam;
accelera ut eruas me.
Esto mihi in Deum protec-
torem:
et in domum refugii, ut
salvum me facias:
- 4 Quoniam fortitudo mea et
refugium meum es tu;
et propter nomen tuum
deduces me, et enutries
me.
- 5 Educes me de laqueo hoc
quem absconderunt mihi:

quoniam tu es protector
meus.
- 6 In manus tuas commendo
spiritum meum;
redemisti me, Domine, Deus
veritatis.
- 7 Odisti observantes vani-
tates supervacue;

Ego autem in Domino sper-
avi:
- 8 exultabo, et lætabor in mis-
ericordia tua.
Quoniam respexisti humili-
tatem meam,

PSALM XXX

(HEB. XXXI)

- 1 Unto the end, a psalm for
David, in an ecstasy.
- 2 In thee, O Lord, have I
hoped,
let me never be confounded:
deliver me in thy justice.
- 3 Bow down thy ear to me:
make haste to deliver me.
Be thou unto me a God, a
protector,
and a house of refuge, to
save me.
- 4 For thou art my strength
and my refuge;
and for thy name's sake
thou wilt lead me, and
nourish me.
- 5 Thou wilt bring me out
of this snare, which they
have hidden for me:
for thou art my protector.
- 6 Into thy hands I commend
my spirit:
thou hast redeemed me, O
Lord, the God of truth.
- 7 Thou hast hated them that
regard vanities, to no
purpose.
But I have hoped in the
Lord:
- 8 I will be glad and rejoice
in thy mercy.
For thou hast regarded my
humility,

- salvast de necessitatibus
animam meam.
- 9 Nec conclusisti me in mani-
bus inimici;
- statuisti in loco spatioso
pedes meos.
- 10 Miserere mei, Domine, quo-
niam tribulor:
conturbatus est in ira oculus
meus, anima mea, et
venter meus:
- 11 Quoniam deficit in dolore
vita mea,
et anni mei in gemitibus.
Infirmata est in paupertate
virtus mea;
et ossa mea conturbata sunt.
- 12 Super omnes inimicos meos
factus sum opprobrium,
et vicinis meis valde,
et timor notis meis.
- Qui videbant me foras fuge-
runt a me.
- 13 Oblivioni datus sum, tam-
quam mortuus a corde.
Factus sum tamquam vas
perditum;
- 14 quoniam audiavi vitupera-
tionem inultorum com-
morantium in circuitu.
in eo dum convenirent simul
adversum me,
accipere animam meam con-
siliati sunt.
- 15 Ego autem in te speravi,
Domine;
dixi: Deus meus es tu;
16 in manibus tuis sortes meæ.
Eripe me de manu inimi-
corum meorum
- thou hast saved my soul out
of distresses.
- 9 And thou hast not shut me
up in the hands of the
enemy:
- thou hast set my feet in a
spacious place.
- 10 Have mercy on me, O Lord,
for I am afflicted:
my eye is troubled with
wrath, my soul, and my
belly:
- 11 For my life is wasted with
grief:
and my years in sighs.
My strength is weakened
through poverty
and my bones are disturbed.
- 12 I am become a reproach
among all my enemies,
and very much to my
neighbors;
and a fear to my acquaint-
ance.
- They that saw me without
fled from me.
- 13 I am forgotten as one dead
from the heart.
I am become as a vessel that
is destroyed.
- 14 For I have heard the blame
of many that dwell round
about.
While they assembled to-
gether against me,
they consulted to take away
my life.
- 15 But I have put my trust in
thee, O Lord:
I said: Thou art my God.
- 16 My lots are in thy hands.
Deliver me out of the hands
of my enemies;

- et a persequentibus me.
- 17 *Illustra faciem tuam super
servum tuum;
salvum me fac in miseri-
cordia tua.*
- 18 *Domine, non confundar,
quoniam invocavi te.*
- Erubescant impii, et dedu-
cantur in infernum;*
- 19 *Muta fiant labia dolosa,*
- Quæ loquuntur adversus
justum iniquitatem,
in superbia, et in abusione.*
- 20 *Quam magna multitudo dul-
cedinis tuæ, Domine,
quam abscondisti timen-
tibus te!*
- Perfecisti eis qui sperant in
te, in conspectu filiorum
hominum.*
- 21 *Abscondes eos in abscondito
faciei tuæ, a conturba-
tione hominum.*
- Proteges eos in tabernaculo
tuo, a contradictione lin-
guarum.*
- 22 *Benedictus Dominus,
quoniam mirificavit miseri-
cordiam suam mihi in
civitate munita.*
- 23 *Ego autem dixi in excessu
mentis meæ:
Projectus sum a facie oculo-
rum tuorum.*
- and from them that perse-
cute me.
- 17 *Make thy face to shine upon
thy servant;
save me in thy mercy.*
- 18 *Let me not be confounded,
O Lord, for I have called
upon thee.*
- Let the wicked be ashamed,
and be brought down to
hell.*
- 19 *Let deceitful lips be made
dumb.*
- Which speak iniquity
against the just, with pride
and abuse.*
- 20 *O how great is the multi-
tude of thy sweetness, O
Lord,
which thou hast hidden for
them that fear thee!*
- Which thou hast wrought
for them that hope in
thee,
in the sight of the sons of
men.*
- 21 *Thou shalt hide them in the
secret of thy face,
from the disturbance of
men.*
- Thou shalt protect them in
thy tabernacle
from the contradiction of
tongues.*
- 22 *Blessed be the Lord,
for he hath shewn his
wonderful mercy to me in
a fortified city.*
- 23 *But I said in the excess of
my mind:
I am cast away from before
thy eyes.*

Ideo exaudisti vocem orationis meæ,
dum clamarem ad te.

Therefore thou hast heard
the voice of my prayer,
when I cried to thee.

- 24 Diligite Dominum, omnes sancti ejus:
quoniam veritatem requirit Dominus,
et retribuet abundanter facientibus superbiam.
25 Viriliter agite, et confortetur cor vestrum,
omnes qui speratis in Domino.

- 24 O love the Lord, all ye his saints:
for the Lord will require truth,
and will repay them abundantly that act proudly.
25 Do ye manfully, and let your heart be strengthened,
all ye that hope in the Lord.

PSALM XXX

THIS psalm is a prayer in time of danger, and a thanksgiving for deliverance. It was probably occasioned by Saul's persecution of David. It is well suited to the incidents narrated in 1 *Kings* xxiii. 25 et seq. When David sought refuge in the wilderness of Maon, he was so hotly pursued by Saul's men that he "*despaired of being able to escape from the face of Saul*," but God delivered him from all dangers. In a typical sense, this psalm may be applied to the suffering Christ. (Cf. *Luke* xxiii. 46): "*Into Thy hands I commend my spirit.*"

Synopsis.—An earnest prayer with confidence and resignation (2–9). After a narration of the dangers and afflictions that beset him (10–14), the Psalmist renews his petition for deliverance (15–19). He praises the goodness and mercy of God (20–23), and urges all to love Him and trust in Him (24, 25).

Verse 1.—"*In an ecstasy*" is not found in the Hebrew text, nor in the early Greek and Latin psalters. In Theodoret's time it was found in some few copies of the Septuagint. It was probably taken

from verse 23: "*But I said in the excess (Greek *en ekstasei*) of my mind.*"

Verses 2-4.—David gives expression to his firm confidence in God's protecting care, and adduces it as a reason for deliverance from dangers.

"I have trusted in Thee, O Lord, may my hope be not in vain! Because of Thy justice Thou renderest to every man according to his works; therefore do Thou deliver me, for I have trusted in Thee. Give ear to my petition and hasten to my aid. Be to me a protecting God (Heb. *a rock of defense*), and a house of refuge for my safety. Thou art my strength and my refuge. For the honor and glory of Thy name Thou wilt give me Thy protecting care."

In Hebrew verse 4 reads: "*For Thou art my rock and my fortress; for Thy name's sake Thou wilt lead me and guide me.*"

Verses 5, 6.—In these words the Psalmist shows how the protecting care of God is to be exercised. Thou wilt deliver me from all the machinations of my enemies, for Thou art my protector. I commend myself to Thee, for Thou art a God faithful to all Thy promises (God of truth); Thou hast ever delivered me from all dangers."

"*Hast delivered*" may also be taken as a past tense expressing firm confidence. "*God of truth*" may be taken in opposition to false gods of verse 7.

Verse 7.—"Thou hatest those who worship vain gods (idols) to no purpose; but I am not such as they, for I trust in Thee who art the true Lord."

The Hebrew reads: "*I have hated,*" instead of "*Thou hast hated,*" thus: "I have hated the wor-

shippers of false gods and I have not trusted in these gods, but in the Lord." The reading of the Vulgate is preferable.

Verses 8, 9.—The Psalmist is confident of divine aid and determines to show his gratitude for God's mercy. "I will rejoice in Thy mercy, for Thou hast had consideration for my affliction; Thou hast delivered me from distress; Thou hast not abandoned me to the power of my enemies; Thou hast set me in safety." The past tense is used to denote certainty of assistance, or to indicate God's habitual mode of action.

Verse 10, 11.—David prays for the mercy which he confidently awaits, and urges his petition with a recital of his trials and afflictions. "My eye has grown dim with sorrow; my soul is harrowed with grief, and my body is wasted away. My life—my years—is swallowed up with trouble and sorrow. My strength is ebbing away and my very bones are troubled because of my affliction."

The Hebrew reads: "*My strength fails because of mine iniquity.*"

Verses 12–14.—Insult is added to injury. Because of his many enemies and the evils he suffers at their hands, the Psalmist has become an object of reproach even amongst his neighbors and friends. They begin to look askance at him as one accursed of God. Those with whom he found friendly shelter begin to feel burdened by his presence, because they are thereby imperiled. The sad fate of Achimelech and the priests of Nob (1 *Kings* xxii. 9 et seq.) shows us what cause they had for avoiding all intercourse with him. When his friends saw him they fled. He was deserted by all and put out of mind

(dead from the heart) even as a broken vessel is carelessly cast aside. On every side he hears calumnies and insults and his neighbors consult together and plan to take his life.

Some authors render the Hebrew word "*meod*" (12), "burden" instead of "*very much*." The passage then reads: "*Because of all my adversaries I am become a reproach and a burden to my neighbors, and a terror to my friends.*" According to the punctuation of the Vulgate, the last part of verse 12 reads: "*They that saw me fled away (foras) from me.*" According to the Hebrew it should be: "*They that saw me out of doors (on the streets) fled from me.*"

Verses 15, 16.—"All the while I have trusted in Thee, O Lord. I have said: Thou art my God. Thou art He who wilt deliver me from all dangers and from all distress. My life and all its vicissitudes are in Thy hands. Deliver me from all my enemies."

Verses 17-19.—After relating all that he suffers from his enemies and from the distrust of his friends David renews his petition for divine assistance. "Deliver me from all my enemies (16), and look upon me with benign countenance. Save me in Thy mercy; let me not be put to shame because of disappointed hopes in Thee. Rather let the wicked enemies be put to shame because of schemes unrealized. Let them be destroyed from the face of the earth (brought down in death) in punishment for their evil deeds. Let their lying and deceitful lips be made dumb, for they malign and calumniate the just with scornful pride."

Verses 20, 21.—In the past David has ever experienced the loving protection of God, and is firmly con-

fident of obtaining it in his present need. "His well-grounded hope expands to triumphant certainty; and this breaks forth into grateful praise of the goodness of God toward His own. The thought: 'How gracious hath the Lord been to me!' takes a more universal form."¹ "How great, O Lord, is Thy goodness, which Thou hast treasured up for them that fear Thee! How great are the favors which Thou hast wrought for them! For their honor and glory and for the confusion of their enemies Thou bestowest these favors openly in the sight of all. Thou protectest them in the shadow of Thy presence (secret of thy face) from the vexations of wicked men. Thou hidest them as in a tent from the calumnies of their enemies."

Verses 22, 23.—David gives thanks to God for protection and deliverance. "Blessed be the Lord, for He hath shown me wonderful mercy. He hath given me a place of safety in a fortified city." This is probably an allusion to some historical incident in the life of David, although many authors interpret it figuratively of divine protection. "Thou didst protect me as effectively as though I were in a strongly fortified city. In my distress and anxiety I said: I have been abandoned by God! and yet Thou didst hear me when I cried out to Thee in supplication."

"Therefore" should be "*nevertheless*," "*yet*."

Verses 24-25.—The Psalmist calls upon all to love and serve God who shows such mercy to those who are faithful to him. "Love the Lord, all ye godly, because He protects the faithful but severely punishes the proud and arrogant. Take courage,

¹ Delitzsch.

therefore, all ye that hope in the Lord." Cf. *Ps.* xxvi. 14.

The parallelism shows that "*truth*" is an abstract term for the concrete, i.e., those who observe truth or justice; the faithful.

PSALMUS XXXI

(HEB. XXXII)

1 Ipsi David intellectus.

Beati quorum remissæ sunt
iniquitates,
et quorum tecta sunt pec-
cata.

2 Beatus vir cui non imputa-
vit Dominus peccatum,

nec est in spiritu ejus dolus.

3 Quoniam tacui, inveterave-
runt ossa mea,
dum clamarem tota die.

4 Quoniam die ac nocte gra-
vata est super me manus
tua,
conversus sum in ærumna
mea, dum configitur spina.
Selah.

5 Delictum meum cognitum
tibi feci:
et injustitiam meam non
abscondi.

Dixi: Confitebor adversum
me injustitiam meam
Domino;
et tu remisisti impietatem
peccati mei. Selah.

6 Pro hac orabit a te omnis
sanctus
in tempore opportuno.

PSALM XXXI

(HEB. XXXII)

1 To David himself, under-
standing.

Blessed are they whose
iniquities are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered.

2 Blessed is the man to whom
the Lord hath not im-
puted sin,
and in whose spirit there is
no guile.

3 Because I was silent my
bones grew old;
whilst I cried out all the
day long.

4 For day and night thy hand
was heavy upon me:

I am turned in my anguish,
whilst the thorn is fas-
tened. Selah.

5 I have acknowledged my
sin to thee,
and my injustice I have not
concealed.

I said I will confess against
myself my injustice to
the Lord:
and thou hast forgiven the
wickedness of my sin.
Selah.

6 For this shall every one that
is holy pray to thee
in a seasonable time.

- Veruntamen in diluvio
aquarum multarum,
ad eum non approximabunt.
- 7 Tu es refugium meum a tribulatione quæ circumdedit me;
exultatio mea, erue me a circumdantibus me. Selah.
- 8 Intellectum tibi dabo,
et instruam te in via hac qua gradieris:
firmabo super te oculos meos.
- 9 Nolite fieri sicut equus et mulus,
quibus non est intellectus.
In camo et freno maxillas eorum constringe,
qui non approximant ad te.
- 10 Multa flagella peccatoris;
sperantem autem in Domino misericordia circumdabit.
- 11 Lætamini in Domino, et exultate, iusti;
et gloriamini, omnes recti corde.
- And yet in a flood of many waters,
they shall not come nigh unto him.
- 7 Thou art my refuge from the trouble which hath encompassed me:
my joy, deliver me from them that surround me. Selah.
- 8 I will give thee understanding,
and I will instruct thee in this way, in which thou shalt go:
I will fix my eyes upon thee.
- 9 Do not become like the horse and the mule,
who have no understanding.
With bit and bridle bind fast their jaws,
who come not near unto thee.
- 10 Many are the scourges of the sinner,
but mercy shall encompass him that hopeth in the Lord.
- 11 Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye just,
and glory, all ye right of heart.

PSALM XXXI

THIS is the second Penitential Psalm. It is an exhortation to penance in which David shows from his own experience how sweet is forgiveness. It is supposed that David wrote this psalm after

his sin of adultery had been forgiven. St. Paul quotes verses 1, 2 as the words of David (*Rom.* iv. 7).

Synopsis.—Happy the man whose sins are forgiven (1, 2). David's experience before acknowledging his sin and doing penance (3, 4); his experience after confession and penance (5). David hopes that all will turn to God in their time of need (6a). He is confident that God will be merciful (6b) because He has ever been his refuge in tribulation (7). An admonition to turn to God willingly instead of being driven by divine chastisement (8, 9), for many are the sorrows of sinners; but those who hope in the Lord obtain mercy (10). Verse 11 is a chorus: "Let all rejoice in the Lord."

"*Ipsi David intellectus*"—"To David himself, understanding." In Hebrew the title reads: "*To David a maskil*." "*To David*" is the dative of authorship as in the other psalms. "*Maskil*" (Septuagint, "*syneseos*" or "*eis synesin*") is an obscure word found in the title of thirteen psalms. It is generally taken to mean a didactic poem. This agrees with the rendering of the Septuagint and Vulgate and is suited to this psalm, which is in fact didactic. Many of the psalms, however, to which it is prefixed are in no sense didactic.

Verses 1, 2.—Thrice happy they who have obtained pardon of all their sins (Heb. "*O the happiness of those*," etc.). Their sins have been taken away and are become invisible in the sight of God because they are no more. He remembers them no longer and acts as if they had never existed (He does not impute them to the sinner). The soul that was the abode of sin now has no spot or stain—has no

deceit.¹ David himself has experienced this happiness and now recalls with grateful heart the condition upon which he obtained it.

Verses 3, 4.—David did not acknowledge his sin and repent it, but remained silent and tried to conceal it. But the more he strove to conceal his crime the louder did conscience cry out against him. His guilt preyed upon his mind to such an extent that it affected his health and strength. He was broken in strength like an old man ("my bones grew old"); and he cried out all day long in sorrow and anguish because he felt the hand of God's justice. His life became a misery that pricked him like a thorn.

The Hebrew reads: "*When I kept silence my bones rotted through my constant groaning. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me, my moisture was changed with the drought of summer. Day and night I felt the weight of God's hand striking in punishment. A fire of anguish burned within that seemed to wither and scorch like the burning drought of summer.*"

Verse 5.—David found relief in a sincere confession of his sin. He firmly resolved to make a confession. He said: "I will accuse myself before the Lord. In accordance with this resolve I have acknowledged my sin and have concealed nothing. As soon as I confessed my guilt before Thee, O Lord, Thou didst forgive me my iniquity."

We find at least an example of such confession and forgiveness in *2 Kings* xii. 13: "*And David said to Nathan: I have sinned against the Lord. And*

¹ There is no proof here of the doctrine of non-imputation of sin. The parallelism clearly shows that the sin was not merely covered up, but completely blotted out.

Nathan said to David: The Lord also hath taken away thy sin."

Verse 6.—“For this reason (because Thou showest mercy to the penitent) every godly man, as I hope, will turn to Thee in time of need (seasonable time). When the tide of adversity and calamity sets in Thou wilt not allow it to approach near unto those who turn to Thee with a contrite and humble heart.”

The Hebrew reads: “*For this cause let every godly man pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found* (i.e., ere it be too late). *Surely when the great waters rise they shall not reach him.*”

Verse 7.—David has experienced just such protecting care. Therefore he turns to God with the words: “Thou art my refuge—my place of hiding from the troubles that surround me. Deliver me now from tribulations that surround me, O Thou who art my joy (i.e., the cause of my joy).”

The Hebrew reads: “*Thou art my hiding place; from trouble Thou wilt guard me. With songs of deliverance wilt Thou compass me about,*” i.e., “at every turn I shall have occasion to sing Thy praise in thanksgiving for deliverance.”

Verse 8.—Some authors hold that verses 8, 9 are the words of God addressed to the Psalmist by way of instruction and admonition. Others maintain that they are the words of the Psalmist himself assuming the role of teacher and adviser. “I will instruct thee and teach thee the way which thou shouldst follow—the way of righteousness. I will be ever solicitous for thy welfare (I will fix my eyes upon thee).”

Verse 9.—“Be not like horses and mules. They have no understanding and must be curbed and ruled

with bridle and bit, else they will not come near thee. Turn to God willingly and joyfully. Be not compelled by the scourge of God's discipline as the horse or the mule is trained to the service of man through force and fear."

The Hebrew text is somewhat obscure and its rendering is more or less conjectural. Thalhoffer thinks that it has been corrupted to some extent. Delitzsch renders it: "*Be ye not as horses, as mules, without understanding. With bit and bridle is their mouth to be curbed; otherwise they will not come near unto thee.*"

Verse 10.—This verse gives a motive for serving God and avoiding sin. The sinner shall be severely punished but those that serve God shall find mercy—they shall be surrounded, as it were, by the mercy and goodness of God. Therefore let them rejoice. "*Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye just, and glory all ye right of heart.*"

PSALMUS XXXII

(HEB. XXXIII)

- 1 Psalmus David.
Exultate, justi, in Domino;
rectos decet collaudatio.
- 2 Confitemini Domino in
cithara;
in psalterio decem chorda-
rum psallite illi.
- 3 Cantate ei canticum novum;
bene psallite ei in vocifera-
tione.
- 4 Quia rectum est verbum
Domini,
et omnia opera ejus in fide.
- 5 Diligit misericordiam et ju-
dicium;
misericordia Domini plena
est terra.
- 6 Verbo Domini cœli firmati
sunt;
et spiritu oris ejus omnis
virtus eorum.
- 7 Congregans sicut in utre
aquas maris:

ponens in thesauris abyssos.
- 8 Timeat Dominum omnis
terra;

PSALM XXXII

(HEB. XXXIII)

- 1 A psalm for David.
Rejoice in the Lord, O ye
just:
praise becometh the up-
right.
- 2 Give praise to the Lord on
the harp;
sing to him with the psal-
tery, the instrument of
ten strings.
- 3 Sing to him a new canticle,
sing well unto him with a
loud noise.
- 4 For the word of the Lord
is right,
and all his works are done
with faithfulness.
- 5 He loveth mercy and judg-
ment;
the earth is full of the mercy
of the Lord.
- 6 By the word of the Lord the
heavens were established;
and all the power of them
by the spirit of his mouth:
- 7 Gathering together the
waters of the sea, as in a
vessel;
laying up the depths in
storehouses.
- 8 Let all the earth fear the
Lord,

- ab eo autem commoveantur
omnes inhabitantes orbem.
- 9 Quoniam ipse dixit, et facta sunt:
ipse mandavit, et creata sunt.
- 10 Dominus dissipat consilia gentium;
reprobat autem cogitationes populorum,
et reprobat consilia principum.
- 11 Consilium autem Domini in æternum manet;
cogitationes cordis ejus in generatione et generationem.
- 12 Beata gens cujus est Dominus Deus ejus;
populus quem elegit in hereditatem sibi.
- 13 De cœlo respexit Dominus;
vidit omnes filios hominum.
- 14 De præparato habitaculo suo respexit
super omnes qui habitant terram.
- 15 Qui finxit sigillatim corda eorum;
qui intelligit omnia opera eorum.
- 16 Non salvatur rex per multam virtutem,
et gigas non salvabitur in multitudine virtutis suæ.
- 17 Fallax equus ad salutem;
in abundantia autem virtutis suæ non salvabitur.
- and let all the inhabitants of the world be in awe of him.
- 9 For he spoke and they were made:
he commanded and they were created.
- 10 The Lord bringeth to nought the counsels of nations;
and he rejecteth the devices of people,
and casteth away the counsels of princes.
- 11 But the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever:
the thoughts of his heart to all generations.
- 12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord:
the people whom he hath chosen for his inheritance.
- 13 The Lord hath looked from heaven:
he hath beheld all the sons of men.
- 14 From his habitation which he hath prepared,
he hath looked upon all that dwell on the earth.
- 15 He who hath made the hearts of every one of them:
who understandeth all their works.
- 16 The king is not saved by a great army:
nor shall the giant be saved by his own great strength.
- 17 Vain is the horse for safety:
neither shall he be saved by the abundance of his strength.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>18 Ecce oculi Domini super
metuentes eum,
et in eis qui sperant super
misericordia ejus;
19 Ut eruat a morte animas
eorum,
et alat eos in fame.</p> | <p>18 Behold the eyes of the Lord
are on them that fear him:
and on them that hope in
his mercy.
19 To deliver their souls from
death;
and feed them in famine.</p> |
| <p>20 Anima nostra sustinet Dom-
inum,
Quoniam adjutor et pro-
tector noster est.
21 Quia in eo lætabitur cor
nostrum,
et in nomine sancto ejus
speravimus.</p> | <p>20 Our soul waiteth for the
Lord:
for he is our helper and
protector.
21 For in him our hearts shall
rejoice:
and in his holy name we
have trusted.</p> |
| <p>22 Fiat misericordia tua, Dom-
ine, super nos,
quemadmodum speravimus
in te.</p> | <p>22 Let thy mercy, O Lord, be
upon us,
as we have hoped in thee.</p> |

PSALM XXXII

Synopsis.—An exhortation to praise God (1–3) because He is just and merciful (4, 5), and because He is the Creator (6–9), who subdues the nations (10) and watches over His chosen people (11, 12). The providence of God extends to all (13–15). Victory is not due to human prowess (16, 17) but to God (18, 19). Therefore we joyfully trust in Him (20, 21). “Be merciful, for we trust in Thee” (22). The title is wanting in Hebrew.

Verses 1–3.—This psalm is closely connected with the preceding and opens with its closing words—an exhortation to praise God. “Joyfully sound the praises of God with harp and song for He is worthy to be praised. It is becoming that the just and upright of heart who have experienced the mercy and goodness of God, should sing His praises. Chant

to Him a song welling up from a new impulse of gratitude. Sing to Him with the sound of trumpets and with music." Cf. *Ps.* xxvi. 6.

Verses 4, 5.—In these and the following verses the Psalmist assigns reasons for the praise of God. "Praise and glorify God, for His word is sincere and all His works are in fidelity to His promises. He is upright and just in all His dealings with men. Such is His goodness and loving-kindness that we can truthfully say: The earth is full of the mercy of God!" Cf. *Deut.* xxxii. 4. "*The works of God are perfect, and all His ways are judgments: God is faithful and without any iniquity; He is just and right.*"

Verses 6, 7.—The omnipotence of God revealed in the act of creation is another reason for praising Him. "By the word of the Lord—by the breath of His mouth—was the earth created and all the heavenly bodies. The waters that covered the earth were gathered together as in a huge water-skin¹ and confined to their beds and channels (treasure-houses)." This verse is a reference to the account of creation given in *Gen.* i. The "*powers of heaven*" are the stars and other heavenly bodies.

Verses 8, 9.—All should fear God with reverential awe because of His majesty and power. He needs but speak and all things obey Him. He said: "Let it be made and it was made; let it be created and it was created." This is another reference to the act of creation.

Verses 10, 11.—The Lord is praiseworthy because He is the invincible ruler of mankind. His omnipotence and His mercy are revealed by His dominion over the world no less than by the act of

¹ Vessels made of skins, used in the East for carrying water.

creation. He thwarts the evil counsels of nations with the same ease that He brought forth the world by the "breath of His mouth." The nations "may take counsel and make plans against the people of Yahveh, but in vain; for He doth bring them to naught."¹ The Lord can bring to naught all the counsels of man, but His own decrees stand firm and irrevocable forever. "*The Lord of hosts hath decreed, and who can disannul it? and His hand is stretched out; and who shall turn it away?*" (Is. xiv. 27).

The third member of verse 10, "*and casteth away the counsels of princes,*" is not found in the present Hebrew text. It adds nothing to the meaning.

Verse 12.—Truly blessed is the nation which has the Lord for its God, because He is omnipotent and able to save His chosen people from all their enemies. "*Blessed art thou, Israel: who is like to thee, O people, that art saved by the Lord? the shield of thy help, and the sword of thy glory; thy enemies shall deny thee, and thou shalt tread upon their necks*" (Deut. xxxiii. 29).

Verses 13–15.—These verses show us the ruling providence of an omniscient God who is worthy of the grateful praise of those who enjoy His protecting care. From His eternal throne in heaven God looks down upon the children of men. He sees all; He knows all; He cares for all, He rules all with justice and mercy because He formed the heart and mind of each and every one,² and therefore knows even their innermost secrets.

Verses 16, 17.—Since God is omniscient and om-

¹ Briggs.

² "*Sigillatim*" for "*singulatim*" or "*singularium*"—each and every one.

nipotent, ruling all from His throne in heaven, it is vain to trust in human strength for victory. "The victory of the king, and the safety of the warrior are not their own works. Their great military power and bodily strength can accomplish nothing without God, who can also be mighty in the weak. Even for purposes of victory the war-horse that promises much can in reality do nothing."¹ Its great strength cannot save it. "*The horse is prepared for the day of battle: but the Lord giveth safety.*" (Prov. xxi. 31.) Cf. Ps. xix. 8.

Verses 18, 19.—"The Lord looks out on the children of men, to confound the counsels of the wicked and to care for those who trust in Him. Behold, His eyes are upon them that fear Him and trust in His mercy, looking up to Him for deliverance from death and famine." The sword, famine, and pestilence were the punishments threatened the wicked. "*And I will send among them the sword, and the famine, and the pestilence: till they be consumed out of the land which I gave them.*" (Jer. xxiv. 10.) Cf. also Deut. xxxii. 23; Ex. v. 12.

Verses 20, 21.—"The eyes of the Lord are on those that trust in His mercy, therefore do we commit ourselves to Him with perfect confidence. He is our helper and our protector." (Heb. "*Our helper and our shield is He.*") "Our heart shall rejoice for we have trusted in God (in His holy name)." "*For*" at the beginning of verse 21 is redundant.

Verse 22.—The Psalmist prays that the people of God may continue to enjoy this mercy because they trust in Him.

¹ Delitzsch.

PSALMUS XXXIII

(HEB. XXXIV)

- 1 Davidi, cum immutavit
vultum suum coram
Achimelech, et dimisit
eum, et abiit.
- 2 ✠ Benedicam Dominum in
omni tempore;
semper laus ejus in ore
meo.
- 3 3 In Domino laudabitur an-
ima mea:
audiant mansueti, et læ-
tentur.
- 4 3 Magnificate Dominum
mecum;
et exaltemus nomen ejus
in idipsum.
- 5 7 Exquisivi Dominum, et ex-
audivit me;
et ex omnibus tribulation-
ibus meis eripuit me.
- 6 7 Accedite ad eum, et illu-
minamini;
et facies vestræ non con-
fundentur.
- 7 7 Iste pauper clamavit, et
Dominus exaudivit
eum,
et de omnibus tribulation-
ibus ejus salvavit eum.
- 8 7 Immitet angelus Domini
in circuitu timentium
eum,
et eripiet eos.

PSALM XXXIII

(HEB. XXXIV)

- 1 For David, when he
changed his counte-
nance before Achime-
lech, who dismissed him,
and he went his way.
- 2 ✠ I will bless the Lord at all
times,
his praise shall be always
in my mouth.
- 3 3 In the Lord shall my soul
be praised:
let the meek hear and
rejoice.
- 4 3 O magnify the Lord with
me;
and let us extol his name
together.
- 5 7 I sought the Lord, and
he heard me;
and he delivered me from
all my troubles.
- 6 7 Come ye to him and be
enlightened:
and your faces shall not
be confounded.
- 7 7 This poor man cried, and
the Lord heard him:

and saved him out of all
his troubles.
- 8 7 The angel of the Lord shall
encamp round about
them that fear him:
and shall deliver them.

- 9 **□** Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus; beatus vir qui sperat in eo.
- 9 **□** O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet: blessed is the man that hopeth in him.
- 10 **⁊** Timete Dominum, omnes sancti ejus, quoniam non est inopia timentibus eum.
- 10 **⁊** Fear the Lord, all ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.
- 11 **□** Divites eguerunt, et esurierunt; inquirentes autem Dominum non minuentur omni bono.
- 11 **□** The rich have wanted, and have suffered hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good.
- 12 **⁊** Venite, filii, audite me: timorem Domini docebo vos.
- 12 **⁊** Come, children, hearken to me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
- 13 **□** Quis est homo qui vult vitam, diligit dies videre bonos?
- 13 **□** Who is the man that desireth life: who loveth to see good days?
- 14 **⁊** Prohibe linguam tuam a malo, et labia tua ne loquantur dolum.
- 14 **⁊** Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.
- 15 **□** Diverte a malo, et fac bonum; inquire pacem, et persequere eam.
- 15 **□** Turn away from evil and do good: seek after peace and pursue it.
- 16 **⁊** Oculi Domini super justos, et aures ejus in preces eorum.
- 16 **⁊** The eyes of the Lord are upon the just: and his ears unto their prayers.
- 17 **□** Vultus autem Domini super facientes mala, ut perdat de terra memoriam eorum.
- 17 **□** But the countenance of the Lord is against them that do evil things: to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
- 18 **⁊** Clamaverunt justi, et Dominus exaudivit eos; et ex omnibus tribulationibus eorum liberavit eos.
- 18 **⁊** The just cried, and the Lord heard them: and delivered them out of all their troubles.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>19 ρ Juxta est Dominus iis qui
tribulato sunt corde,

et humiles spiritu salvabit.</p> | <p>19 ρ The Lord is nigh unto
them that are of a con-
trite heart:
and he will save the
humble of spirit.</p> |
| <p>20 7 Multæ tribulationes ius-
torum;
et de omnibus his liberabit
eos Dominus.</p> | <p>20 7 Many are the afflictions
of the just;
but out of them all will
the Lord deliver them.</p> |
| <p>21 7 Custodit Dominus omnia
ossa eorum;
unum ex his non contere-
tur.</p> | <p>21 7 The Lord keepeth all their
bones,
not one of them shall be
broken.</p> |
| <p>22 7 Mors peccatorum pessima;

et qui oderunt justum
delinquent.</p> | <p>22 7 The death of the wicked
is very evil:
and they that hate the
just shall be guilty.</p> |
| <p>23 D Redimet Dominus animas
servorum suorum,
et non delinquent omnes
qui sperant in eo.</p> | <p>23 D The Lord will redeem the
souls of his servants:
and none of them that
trust in him shall offend.</p> |

PSALM XXXIII

THIS psalm is alphabetic in form, but lacks the *Vau* (7) verse and has an additional *Pe* (D) verse at the end. Cf. *Ps.* xxiv.

Synopsis.—David praises God (2, 3a), and calls upon the oppressed and afflicted to join with him in praise (3b, 4), because he has been delivered from great dangers (5). He urges them to turn to God for comfort and aid (6), and assures them by his own experience (7, 8). He exhorts the afflicted to trust in God and to learn by experience that He is a loving Protector (9, 11). The Psalmist assumes the office of teacher (12, 13), instructing all to avoid evil and to do good (14, 15), because God loves and protects the just (16), but severely punishes the wicked (17).

He further illustrates God's dealings with the just (18-21) and the unjust (22).

Verse 1.—The title indicates that this psalm was occasioned by the incident narrated in 1 *Kings* xxi. 10-15. David fled from Saul and came to Achis (Achimelech), king of Geth, but fearing for his life he feigned madness and was allowed to depart in safety. “*He changed his countenance before them, and slipped down between their hands; and he stumbled against the doors of the gate, and his spittle ran down upon his beard. And Achis said to his servants: You saw the man was mad: why have you brought him to me? . . . David therefore went from thence and fled to the cave of Odollam.*”

The Hebrew text reads: “*To David, when he changed his reason before Abimelech: and he expelled him, and he went.*”

Abimelech seems to have been a title common to the kings of the Philistines, as Pharaoh was to the kings of Egypt, or Cæsar to the Roman Emperors.

Verses 2-3a.—The Psalmist has received some signal favor (5) and now pours out his gratitude in words of praise. “I will bless the Lord at all times; my tongue shall be ever ready to sing His praises. I (my soul) shall ever glory in the Lord and boast of the favors He has shown me.” “*Laudabitur*” of the Vulgate must be taken in a reflexive sense, meaning “to boast or glory in.”

Verses 3b, 4.—David calls upon others to join with him in praising God. “May those who are in affliction hear my story and rejoice in the hope of a like deliverance. O ye humble and afflicted, join with me in singing the praises of God. Let us glorify His name together.”

Verses 5, 6.—“In time of trouble and affliction, I turned to the Lord and sought His aid, and my prayers were not unheeded. He delivered me from all my straits. Come unto Him, all you that are afflicted, and you shall be comforted (favored with His benign countenance); you shall no longer be clouded with sorrow, humiliation, and shame (your faces shall not be confounded).” Cf. *Matt.* xi. 28. “*Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.*”

Verses 7, 8.—The Psalmist has been urging the oppressed and afflicted to trust in God. He now encourages them by a recital of past experiences. A certain poor man (i.e., David himself) cried out to the Lord in his troubles and his prayers were heard. The Lord delivered him from all his afflictions. The Lord is merciful to His faithful servants and sends His angel to guard and protect them. The angel of the Lord encamps¹ round about them that fear Him. Cf. *Ex.* xxiii. 20; xxxii. 34; *Jos.* v. 14.

Verses 9-11.—“Turn to God in your troubles, commend yourselves to His protection, and learn from experience that He is a kind and loving protector. Those that fear Him shall enjoy His special providence and shall want for nothing. The wicked (rich) may suffer want and hunger, but the righteous shall enjoy an abundance.” Cf. *Matt.* vi. 33. “*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.*”

Temporal rewards and punishments were espe-

¹ The Septuagint has *παρεμβάλλειν*, which is sometimes used in the sense of encamping. A comparison with the Hebrew shows that it is so used here.

cially prominent in the Old Dispensation, because the people, as yet rude and carnal, required such rewards and punishments to deter them from sins and to encourage them in the service of God.

In the Hebrew verse 11 reads: "*Young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord do not want any good thing,*" i.e., young and active lions may suffer hunger from lack of prey, sooner than God will suffer any want to those who serve Him.

Verses 12, 13.—The Psalmist now assumes the part of a loving father instructing his children in the fear and love of God. "Come now my children, listen to me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord." The word "*children*" is not to be taken literally; it is simply a term of endearment used by a teacher in addressing his pupils.

The Psalmist gives instructions by way of question and answer. He first proposes the question (13), and then answers it (14-17); "Who is the man that wishes to enjoy life; that wishes to see good days?" In other words: "Do you wish to enjoy a long and happy life? Then will I show you how."

Verses 14, 15.—"If you wish to enjoy happiness you must be just in word and deed. Guard your tongue against all evil; let not deceit pass your lips. Turn from evil actions, and do good; especially seek to live in peace and harmony with all men. Seek to have peace and strive earnestly to preserve it." Cf. James iii. 2. "*If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.*" Rom. xiv. 19. "*Therefore let us follow after the things that are of peace.*" Heb. xii. 14. "*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see God.*"

Verses 16, 17.—The just shall be happy and prosperous because God looks upon them with favor and attends to their supplications. On the contrary, the wicked shall feel the weight of his anger. He will destroy them so completely that their very name shall be heard no more on earth.

Verses 18, 19.—“Whenever the just cried out to God, He heard them and delivered them from all their troubles. He is ever nigh to the broken-hearted and to the humbled of spirit. He protects them from all dangers.”

Verses 20, 21.—“The just may suffer many misfortunes, yet the Lord will deliver them. He protects them from all harm. Not a bone of their body shall be broken”—“a pictorial exemplification of the thought that God does not suffer the righteous to come to the extremity; that He does not suffer him to be severed from His almighty protecting love, nor to become the sport of the oppressors. Nevertheless, we call to mind the literal fulfilment which these words of the Psalmist received in the Crucified One.”¹ Cf. *John* xix. 33.

Verse 22.—The just enjoy the loving protection of God, but the wicked—those who hate and persecute the righteous—shall perish miserably.

The Hebrew word rendered “*delinquere*”—“to be guilty”—means rather to suffer punishment.

The Hebrew text reads: “*Evil shall slay the wicked, and they that hate the righteous shall be punished.*”

Verse 23.—The psalm ends with a summing up of the blessings of the just. God will deliver them from

¹ Delitzsch.

all distress and danger and they shall not perish
(Heb. " they shall not suffer punishment ").

In the early Church this Psalm was chanted
during communion. Cf. " Apostolic Constitutions,"
viii. 13.

PSALMUS XXXIV

(HEB. XXXV)

- 1 Ipsi David.
Judica, Domine, nocentes
me;
expugna impugnantes me.
- 2 Apprehende arma et scutum,
et exsurge in adjutorium
mihi.
- 3 Effunde frameam, et con-
clude adversus eos qui
persequuntur me;
dic animæ meæ: Salus tua
ego sum.
- 4 Confundantur et reverean-
tur quærentes animam
meam;
Avertantur retrorsum et
confundantur cogitantes
mihi mala.
- 5 Fiant tamquam pulvis ante
faciem venti,
et angelus Domini coarctans
eos.
- 6 Fiat via illorum tenebræ,
et lubricum;
et angelus Domini perse-
quens eos.
- 7 Quoniam gratis absconde-
runt mihi interitum laquei
sui,
supervacue exprobraverunt
animam meam.

PSALM XXXIV

(HEB. XXXV)

- 1 For David himself.
Judge thou, O Lord, them
that wrong me:
overthrow them that fight
against me.
- 2 Take hold of arms and
shield:
and rise up to help me.
- 3 Bring out the sword, and
shut up the way against
them that persecute me:
say to my soul: I am thy
salvation.
- 4 Let them be confounded and
ashamed that seek after
my soul.
Let them be turned back
and be confounded that
devise evil against me.
- 5 Let them become as dust
before the wind:
and let the angel of the Lord
straiten them.
- 6 Let their way become dark
and slippery;
and let the angel of the
Lord pursue them.
- 7 For without cause they
have hidden their net for
me unto destruction:
without cause they have
upbraided my soul.

- 8 Veniat illi laqueus quem ignorat,
et captio quam abscondit apprehendat eum,
et in laqueum cadat in ipsum.
- 9 Anima autem mea exultabit in Domino,
et delectabitur super salutari suo.
- 10 Omnia ossa mea dicent: Domine, quis similis tibi? Eripiens inopem de manu fortiorum ejus;
egenum et pauperem a diripientibus eum.
- 11 Surgentes testes iniqui, quæ ignorabam interrogabant me.
- 12 Retribuebant mihi malis pro bonis, sterilitatem animæ meæ.
- 13 Ego autem, cum mihi molesti essent, induebar cilicio.
Humiliabam in jejuniio animam meam,
et oratio mea in sinu meo convertetur.
- 14 Quasi proximum et quasi fratrem nostrum sic complacebam;
quasi lugens et contristatus sic humiliabar.
- 15 Et adversum me lætati sunt, et convenerunt;
- 8 Let the snare which he knoweth not come upon him:
and let the net which he hath hidden catch him:
and into that very snare let them ¹ fall.
- 9 But my soul shall rejoice in the Lord;
and shall be delighted in his salvation.
- 10 All my bones shall say: Lord, who is like to thee? Who deliverest the poor from the hand of them that are stronger than he; the needy and the poor from them that strip him.
- 11 Unjust witnesses rising up have asked me things I knew not.
- 12 They repaid me evil for good:
to the depriving me of my soul.
- 13 But as for me, when they were troublesome to me, I was clothed with hair-cloth.
I humbled my soul with fasting;
and my prayer shall be turned into my bosom.
- 14 As a neighbor and as an own brother, so did I please:
as one mourning and sorrowful so was I humbled.
- 15 But they rejoiced against me, and came together:

¹ Vulgate, " *Let him fall.*"

- congregata sunt super me
flagella, et ignoravi.
- 16 Dissipati sunt, nec com-
puncti,
tentaverunt me, subsanna-
verunt me subsannatione;
frenduerunt super me denti-
bus suis.
- 17 Domine, quando respicies?
restituē animam meam a
malignitate eorum,
a leonibus unīcam meam.
- 18 Confitebor tibi in ecclesia
magna;
in populo gravi laudabo te.
- 19 Non supergaudeant mihi
qui adversantur mihi
inique,
qui oderunt me gratis, et
annuunt oculis.
- 20 Quoniam mihi quidem paci-
fice loquebantur;
et in iracundia terræ loquen-
tes, dolos cogitabant.
- 21 Et dilataverunt super me os
suum;
dixerunt: Euge, euge, vi-
derunt oculi nostri.
- 22 Vidisti, Domine, ne si-
leas;
Domine, ne discedas a me.
- 23 Exurge et intende iudicio
meo;
Deus meus, et Dominus
meus, in causam meam.
- 24 Iudica me secundam justi-
tiam tuam, Domine Deus
meus,
- scourges were gathered to-
gether upon me, and I
knew not.
- 16 They were separated, and
repented not:
they tempted me, they
scoffed at me with scorn:
they gnashed upon me with
their teeth.
- 17 Lord, when wilt thou look
upon me?
rescue thou my soul from
their malice:
my only one from the lions.
- 18 I will give thanks to thee
in a great church;
I will praise thee in a strong
people.
- 19 Let not them that are my
enemies wrongfully re-
joice over me:
who have hated me without
cause, and wink with the
eyes.
- 20 For they spoke indeed
peaceably to me;
and speaking in the anger
of the earth they devised
guile.
- 21 And they opened their
mouth wide against me;
they said: Well done, well
done, our eyes have seen it.
- 22 Thou hast seen, O Lord,
be not thou silent:
O Lord, depart not from me.
- 23 Arise, and be attentive to
my judgment:
to my cause, my God, and
my Lord.
- 24 Judge me, O Lord my God,
according to thy justice,

- | | |
|--|---|
| et non supergaudeant mihi. | and let them not rejoice over me. |
| 25 Non dicant in cordibus suis:
Euge, euge, animæ nostræ;
nec dicant: Devoravimus eum. | 25 Let them not say in their hearts: It is well, it is well, to our mind: neither let them say: We have swallowed him up. |
| 26 Erubescant et reveantur simul
qui gratulantur malis meis;
Induantur confusione et reverentia
qui magna loquuntur super me. | 26 Let them blush: and be ashamed together,
who rejoice at my evils.
Let them be clothed with confusion and shame,
who speak great things against me. |
| 27 Exultent et lætentur qui volunt justitiam meam,

et dicant semper: Magnificetur Dominus,
qui volunt pacem servi ejus. | 27 Let them rejoice and be glad, who are well pleased with my justice,
and let them say always:
The Lord be magnified,
who delights in the peace of his servant. |
| 28 Et lingua mea meditabitur
justitiam tuam,
tota die laudem tuam. | 28 And my tongue shall meditate thy justice,
thy praise all the day long. |

PSALM XXXIV

THIS psalm probably belongs to the period of David's persecution by Saul. Some authors consider it a poetical expansion of David's expostulation with Saul. 1 *Kings* xxiv. 16: "*Be the Lord judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and judge my cause, and deliver me out of thy hand.*"

The psalm may be divided into three parts (1-10, 11-18, 19-28), each ending with promises of thanksgiving. The same thoughts recur throughout the whole psalm; the first part, however, is characterized by imprecations; the second by sorrowful remi-

niscences; and the third, by humble petitions for deliverance.¹

Synopsis.—"Battle in my defense, O Lord (1-3); strike down my enemies (4-6); let them be caught in their own snares (7, 8). Then shall I rejoice and praise Thee (9, 10). False witnesses have risen up against me (11, 12). For sympathy and kind deeds (13, 14) I have received but ingratitude and injury (15, 16). Deliver me, O Lord, and I will praise Thee in the sight of all (17, 18). Let my enemies have no occasion to rejoice at my undoing (19-21). Thou seest their evil designs; arise, therefore, in my defense; take up my cause (22-25). Confound all my enemies (26), that my friends may rejoice and glorify Thee (27). Then will I praise Thee (28)."

Verses 1-3.—David calls upon God, a just judge, and a mighty warrior. "Condemn those who wrong me. (In Heb. "*Plead my cause with them that contend against me.*") Fight with them that fight me. Take up Thy arms and Thy buckler and hasten to my defence. Unsheath Thy sword, and block the advance of the enemy. Show by Thine actions (say to my soul) that Thou art my defence."

Instead of "*arms*" and "*shield*" the Hebrew reads "*shield*" and "*buckler*." The shield was the smaller, to protect the head and chest; the buckler was larger, to protect the whole body.

Verses 4-6.—David sets forth the manner in which he expects God to protect him. "Confound, O Lord, and put to shame all those who seek my life. Turn back in ignominious defeat all those who plot evil against me. Disperse them like chaff from the threshing floor. (Cf. *Ps. i. 4.*) Let Thy angel press

¹ M'Swiney.

on in pursuit. Beset the way of their flight with difficulties and dangers. Make it dark and slippery (Heb. and Vulg. "*darkness and slipperiness*"); and let Thy angel pursue, thrusting them down." The words "*straiten*" (Heb. "*thrust down*") and "*pursue*" have been transposed, as most modern interpreters think: for "pursuit" is best suited to the simile "as chaff before the wind"; and "thrusting down" to the "darkness and slippery places" into which, in their flight, their way leads them.¹

Verse 7.—The Psalmist states briefly the reasons for imploring such dire punishments upon his enemies. "Without reason have they conspired against me. I gave them no cause for enmity, yet they have unjustly plotted to take my life, as a hunter lays snares and digs pits to entrap wild beasts."

"*Interitum laquei*"—"destruction of a snare"—is used for "*laqueus interitus*," a snare of destruction.

In the present Hebrew text verse 7 reads: "*For without cause they hid for me the pit of their net; without cause they dug for my soul,*" i.e., for me. The text is generally corrected thus: "For without cause they hid for me their net; without cause a pit they dug for my soul."

Verse 8.—"May destruction come upon them when they least expect it! May they be entangled in the snare of their own setting! May the evils they planned for me be turned upon themselves!"

The enemies of David are here referred to in the singular with a collective meaning, or for the purpose of singling out some special enemy: v.g., Saul. "*In laqueum in ipsum*" is a Hebraism for "*in*

¹ Briggs.

ipsum laqueum," "in that very snare." As usually interpreted, the Hebrew reads: "*Let destruction come upon him unawares, and let his net, which he hid, catch him: with a crash let him fall into it.*"

Verses 9-11.—"When my enemies shall have been brought down in defeat and destruction then shall I praise God with a grateful heart for the deliverance which He hath wrought. My very bones shall be thrilled with joy; my whole being shall cry out in praise: Who is like to Thee, O Lord, in goodness and power! Thou who deliverest the poor and afflicted from their most powerful and bitter enemies!" "*Quantum potes, tantum aude, quia major omni laude.*"¹

Verses 12, 13.—In these verses David describes at length the ingratitude and evil doings of his enemies. Unjust witnesses (Heb. "witnesses of violence") appear against David charging ("asking about") crimes and acts of violence of which he is entirely innocent ("knows not of"). They repay his kindness with evil and bring upon him great sorrow and affliction of soul.

Sterilitas (Septuagint *ateknia*) means childlessness and is here used figuratively to designate great sorrow and abandonment. Throughout the Old Testament childlessness is spoken of as a great evil, whereas a numerous progeny is looked upon as a special blessing from God.

In Hebrew verse 12 reads: "*They reward me evil for good: bereavement hath come upon my soul.*"

Verse 13.—"I gave them no cause for enmity. Even when they persecuted me I entertained no thought of revenge. I humbled myself and suffered

¹ From hymn, "*Lauda Sion*," by St. Thomas Aquinas.

their wrongs. I put on the garment of penance; I fasted and prayed to the Lord."

The reading of the Hebrew text agrees better with the context of the psalm. "*But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I mortified my soul with fasting, and my prayer returned into my bosom.*"

This reading shows the Psalmist giving proofs of friendship, rather than cause for enmity. He sympathized with them in their sorrows and afflictions. When they were sick he donned the sackcloth of penance, and fasted and prayed for their recovery. "*My prayer returned into my own bosom.*" This phrase has been interpreted in various ways. It is probably an allusion to the attitude of afflicted persons in prayer with the head inclined upon the breast, and the arms folded. Cf. 3 *Kings* xviii. 42.

Verse 14.—The meaning of the Vulgate seems to be: "I endeavored to be agreeable and to live in peace with my adversaries. I treated them as friends; even as a brother. If any affliction or misfortune befell them I sympathized with them and suffered as if the affliction were my own." The Hebrew reads: "*As for a friend, a brother to me, did I go about; as one who sorroweth for a mother, I went softly in mourning attire,*" or as some render it: "As for a friend, a brother of mine, I went about: as one sorrowing for a mother I bowed down mourning." The general meaning is the same as that of the Vulgate. David simply wishes to give an example of kindly deeds repaid by evil. (Cf. verse 12.) He treated them as friends, even as an own brother. He sympathized with them in their troubles and sorrowed as one who has lost his mother. What has he received in return for his kindness and friendship!

Verse 15.—“ In spite of my friendly feeling and acts of love toward them they rejoiced against me and plotted together for my ruin. These evils were being planned against me and all the while I suspected nothing, because I considered them my friends.”

Verse 16.—The first part of this verse—“ *they were separated and repented not* ”—is unintelligible. “ They tempted me,” i.e., “ they made trial of my constancy in bearing with their injuries and insults; they sneered at me contemptuously, and in their rage they gnashed their teeth at me like savage beasts.”

The Hebrew text of verses 15, 16 is obscure and variously rendered by the different interpreters. Delitzsch renders it thus: “ *And now when I halt they are joyous and gather themselves together; the abject gather themselves together against me, and those whom I do not know; they mock and cease not. After the manner of common parasites, they gnash upon me with their teeth.* ” The phrase “ *they mock and cease not* ” belongs to verse 15 in the Hebrew text, but corresponds to the words “ *dissipati sunt, nec compuncti* ” of verse 16 in the Vulgate. Briggs renders these verses as follows: “ But when I halted, they rejoiced, and they gathered together (in throngs) against me. Smiters tore me, for that of which I am not aware, without cessation; in my pollution they mocked; they gnashed upon me with their teeth.”

Verses 17, 18.—“ O Lord, when wilt Thou come to my rescue? ” In Hebrew, “ *How long, O Lord, wilt Thou look on* (sc. with indifference)? Restore me (my soul: my only one)¹ to my former happiness and prosperity by delivering me from my

¹ Cf. Ps. xxi. 21.

wicked enemies who are like roaring lions. Then will I praise Thee before all the people; I will make known to them Thy goodness and mercy." In Hebrew: "*I will praise Thee in a great congregation; among much people will I sing praise unto Thee.*"

Verse 19.—In this part of the psalm (19–28) David renews the description of his godless enemies, but his soul has become tranquil in prayer, and accordingly the language is clearer and moves on with its accustomed calmness.¹

"Rescue me, O Lord, lest my unjust and jeering enemies—those who hate me without cause and wink the eye in derision—have occasion to rejoice at my defeat and destruction."

The Hebrew text reads: "*Let not my enemies falsely rejoice over me. Let not those who hate me without cause, wink the eye,*" i.e., "Let not my enemies rejoice at my downfall; let them not deride me by jeering grimaces."

Verse 20.—As it stands in the Septuagint and Vulgate, this verse has no apparent meaning. The words "*terræ loquentes*" are not found in Codex B. The meaning then becomes: "They pretended peace and friendship, but in their anger they devised deceitful plans to destroy me." The Authorized Version renders it: "*For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.*" Briggs renders it: "*For it is not peace that they speak, but against my tranquillity deceitful things they devise.*"

Verse 21.—"They open wide their mouth; they laugh and jeer at my misfortunes. With malignant joy they cry out: Aha, aha, we see the desire of our

¹ Delitzsch.

hearts; we see him overwhelmed with misfortunes and ready to fall into our hands."

Verses 22, 23.—"Yea, Lord, Thou also hast seen my straits; Thou hast seen the wicked schemes of the enemy. Be not indifferent to my fate; be not far from me in my necessities. Bestir Thyself in my behalf; take up my cause and defend me against my persecutors."

Verses 24, 25.—"Vindicate me, O Lord, as becomes Thy justice, that my enemies may not rejoice at my misfortunes. May they never have it to say in their heart: It is well; everything is coming out as we wished. May they never be able to say: We have completely vanquished him; we have put him out of the way as completely as if we had swallowed him."

Verse 26.—"May those who rejoice at my misfortunes and speak insolently against me be covered with shame and confusion at my deliverance."

Verse 27.—"Let my friends, who are interested in my cause, rejoice and be glad, because of my vindication and deliverance. May those who desire the peace and happiness of God's servant always praise and glorify Him."

The Hebrew (followed in this case by the Douay) reads: "*The Lord be magnified, who delights in the peace of His servant.*" The reading of the Septuagint and Vulgate gives a better parallelism.

Verse 28.—"My tongue shall tell of Thy justice and goodness toward me; Thy praise shall ever be on my lips."

"*Meditate*" is here used in the sense of speaking or relating.

PSALMUS XXXV

(HEB. XXXVI)

- 1 In finem, servo Domini ipsi David.
- 2 Dixit injustus ut delinquat in semetipso;
non est timor Dei ante oculos ejus.
- 3 Quoniam dolose egit in conspectu ejus,
ut inveniatur iniquitas ejus ad odium.
- 4 Verba oris ejus iniquitas, et dolus;
noluit intelligere ut bene ageret.
- 5 Iniquitatem meditatus est in cubili suo;
astitit omni viæ non bonæ.
malitiam autem non odivit.
- 6 Domine, in cælo misericordia tua,
et veritas tua usque ad nubes.
- 7 Justitia tua sicut montes Dei;
judicia tua abyssus multa.
Homines et jumenta salvabis, Domine,
- 8 quemadmodum multiplicasti misericordiam tuam, Deus.

PSALM XXXV

(HEB. XXXVI)

- 1 Unto the end, for the servant of God, David himself.
- 2 The unjust hath said within himself, that he would sin: there is no fear of God before his eyes.
- 3 For in his sight he hath done deceitfully,
that his iniquity may be found unto hatred.
- 4 The words of his mouth are iniquity and guile:
he would not understand that he might do well.
- 5 He hath devised iniquity on his bed,
he hath set himself on every way that is not good:
but evil he hath not hated.
- 6 O Lord, thy mercy is in heaven,
and thy truth reacheth even to the clouds.
- 7 Thy justice is as the mountains of God,
thy judgments are a great deep.
Men and beasts thou wilt preserve, O Lord:
- 8 O how hast thou multiplied thy mercy, O God!

- | | |
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| <p>Filii autem hominum in
tegmine alarum tuarum
sperabunt.</p> <p>9 Inebriabuntur ab ubertate
domus tuæ,</p> <p>et torrente voluptatis tuæ
potabis eos;</p> <p>10 Quoniam apud te est fons
vitæ,
et in lumine tuo videbimus
lumen.</p> <p>11 Prætede misericordiam tu-
am scientibus te,
et justitiam tuam his qui
recto sunt corde.</p> <p>12 Non veniat mihi pes super-
biæ,
et manus peccatoris non
moveat me.</p> <p>13 Ibi ceciderunt qui operantur
iniquitatem;
expulsi sunt, nec potuerunt
stare.</p> | <p>But the children of men shall
put their trust under the
covert of thy wings.</p> <p>9 They shall be inebriated
with the plenty of thy
house;
and thou shalt make them
drink of the torrent of
thy pleasure.</p> <p>10 For with thee is the foun-
tain of life:
and in thy light we shall see
light.</p> <p>11 Extend thy mercy to them
that know thee,
and thy justice to them that
are right in heart.</p> <p>12 Let not the foot of pride
come to me,
and let not the hand of the
sinner move me.</p> <p>13 There the workers of in-
iquity are fallen,
they are cast out, and could
not stand.</p> |
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PSALM XXXV

Synopsis.—The wickedness of those who fear not God (2–5). The incomprehensible riches of God's mercy and goodness (6, 7), manifested to mankind (8–10). A prayer for continued protection (11) lest the wicked prevail (12). The ungodly shall fall to rise no more (13).

Verse 1.—In order to get any meaning from the text of the Vulgate we must construe "*in semetipso*" with "*dixit*" instead of with "*delinquat*" and render it as the Douay Version does. "The unjust man says to himself: I will sin! He is determined to commit sin because he has no thought of God

and His justice; he has no fear of God in his heart."

The verse may also be rendered: "The wicked, that he may sin, says within himself that there is no fear of God before his eyes."¹ In order to sin more fearlessly the sinner stifles his conscience and persuades himself that there is no reason to fear God.

The present Hebrew text reads: "*An oracle of transgression to the wicked man, in the midst of my heart: There is no fear of God before his eyes.*" This gives no meaning. St. Jerome, the Syriac, and Arabic versions, and some Mss. of the Hebrew have "*his heart*" instead of "*my heart*." This is a better reading differing from the Septuagint and Vulgate in vowel points only: "There is an oracle of transgression (concerning transgression) to the wicked in the midst of his heart (saying) that he need have no fear of God before his eyes." Sin is thus personified and represented as encouraging the sinner to persevere in his evil ways, for there is no need to fear God. In other words, the sinner is fully resolved to go on in his sinful ways because he fears not God; or has even persuaded himself that there is no God.

Verse 3.—The meaning of this verse both in the Vulgate and the Hebrew is very obscure. Many attempts have been made to amend the Hebrew text but all are unsatisfactory. The Vulgate seems to mean that the wicked man deals deceitfully in the sight of God until his iniquity becomes most hateful. Thalhofer gives a possible meaning: "The wicked man deceives himself, when he thinks that God discovers not his iniquity nor hates it."

Verse 4.—As the thoughts and desires of the

¹ M'Swiny.

wicked are given up to sin, so also are his words and actions. From an evil heart there comes forth nothing but evil. His words are full of trouble and deceit, and he looks not to the uprightness of his acts. He does not even care to know how to act uprightly. He has thrown off all restraint because he fears not God.

The Hebrew reads: "*The words of his mouth are evil and deceit; he hath ceased to act wisely and well.*"

Verse 5.—Even at night, upon his bed, the wicked man is planning to do some evil. He has given himself up entirely to evil and keeps in the path of sin with a diabolical determination. He has lost all horror and hatred for sin; he has completely stifled the voice of conscience.

Verses 6, 7.—The infinite goodness and mercy of God are contrasted with the deep iniquity described above. Great is the wickedness and deceit of the ungodly, but we have nothing to fear; far greater is God's loving-kindness toward us. "Thy mercy, O Lord, and Thy fidelity to all Thy promises are infinite. They reach even to the heavens, transcending all human comprehension. Thy justice to the righteous and to the ungodly is like the rock-ribbed mountains ¹—firm and unchanging. Thy judgments are like the boundless deep—unsearchable and incomprehensible." (Cf. *Romans xi. 33.*) "*Oh, the depth of the riches of wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!*" "Thy loving providence extends to all Thy creatures—from man even

¹ "*Mountains of God,*" is a Hebraism, meaning very high mountains.

to the beasts of the field. What have we to fear for ourselves or for our possessions! "

Verses 8-10.—Filled with admiration the Psalmist cries out: "How great is Thy mercy, O God; (Hebrew, "*How precious* ") how valuable above all treasures! Therefore shall the righteous seek safety beneath the wings of Thy protection. They shall be filled from the abundance of Thy house; from the torrent of Thy delights shall they drink."

This stream of delight is inexhaustible because its fountain-head is in God, the inexhaustible source of all good. (Cf. *Jer.* ii. 13.) "*They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water.*" "Under Thy favor and protection (in Thy light), we shall enjoy happiness and prosperity (we shall see light)."

God's merciful providence toward the righteous is represented under the figure of a sacrificial banquet in which the guests with festal joy partake of the abundance of the house of the Lord. (Cf. *Jer.* xxxi. 14.) "*And I will fill the soul of the priests with fatness; and My people shall be filled with My good things, saith the Lord.*"

Verses 9, 10 can be applied, in an accommodated sense, to the Beatific Vision, in which the soul is completely filled with the delights of God's house. In the light of glory we shall see the Light eternal, and drink from the river of life that flows, clear as crystal, from the throne of God, and of the Lamb (*Apoc.* xxii. 1).

Verse 11, 12.—In these verses the Psalmist prays that God continue to protect him from the violence of his enemies. "Lengthen out, O Lord, Thy loving-kindness and justice to those who know and serve Thee. Continue Thy protecting care, lest the proud

and arrogant oppressor come upon me and prevail against me."

Verse 13.—The Psalmist is confident his prayer will be heard. Even now, as it were, he sees the enemy laid low in defeat. Like Isaias he beholds them struck down in death without hope of rising again. Cf. *Is.* xxvi. 14: "*Let not the dead live, let not the giants rise again: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and hast destroyed all their memory.*"

PSALMUS XXXVI

(HEB. XXXVII)

- 1 Psalmus ipsi David.
 ❧ Noli æmulari in malignan-
 tibus:
 neque zelaveris facientes
 iniquitatem;
- 2 Quoniam tamquam fœ-
 num velociter arescent:
 et quemadmodum olera
 herbarum cito decident.
- 3 3 Spera in Domino, et fac
 bonitatem;
 et inhabita terram, et
 pasceris in divitiis ejus.
- 4 Delectare in Domino,
 et dabit tibi petitiones
 cordis tui.
- 5 1 Revela Domino viam
 tuam,
 et spera in eo, et ipse
 faciet.
- 6 Et educet quasi lumen jus-
 titiam tuam,
 et judicium tuum tam-
 quam meridiem:
- 7 7 Subditus esto Domino, et
 ora eum.
 Noli æmulari in eo qui
 prosperatur in via sua,
 in homine faciente injus-
 titias.
- 8 7 Desine ab ira, et dere-
 linque furem:

PSALM XXXVI

(HEB. XXXVII)

- 1 A psalm for David himself.
 ❧ Be not emulous of evil-
 doers;
 nor envy them that work
 iniquity.
- 2 For they shall shortly
 wither away as grass,
 and as the green herbs
 shall quickly fall.
- 3 3 Trust in the Lord, and do
 good,
 and dwell in the land, and
 thou shalt be fed with
 its riches.
- 4 Delight in the Lord,
 and he will give thee the
 requests of thy heart.
- 5 1 Commit thy way to the
 Lord.
 and trust in him, and he
 will do it.
- 6 And he will bring forth thy
 justice as the light,
 and thy judgment as the
 noonday.
- 7 7 Be subject to the Lord,
 and pray to him.
 Envy not the man who
 prospereth in his way;
 the man who doth unjust
 things.
- 8 7 Cease from anger, and
 leave rage:

- noli æmulari ut maligneris.
- 9 Quoniam qui malignantur exterminabuntur; sustinentes autem Dominum, ipsi hereditabunt terram.
- 10 † Et adhuc pusillum, et non erit peccator; et quæres locum ejus, et non invenes.
- 11 Mansueti autem hereditabunt terram, et delectabuntur in multitudine pacis.
- 12 † Observabit peccator justum: et stridebit super eum dentibus suis.
- 13 Dominus autem irridebit eum, quoniam prospicit quod veniet dies ejus.
- 14 † Gladium evaginaverunt peccatores, intenderunt arcum suum. Ut dejiciant pauperem et inopem, ut trucident rectos corde.
- 15 Gladius eorum intret in corda ipsorum; et arcus eorum confringatur.
- 16 † Melius est modicum justo, super divitias peccatorum multas.
- 17 Quoniam brachia peccatorum conterentur, confirmat autem justos Dominus.
- have no emulation to do evil.
- 9 For evildoers shall be cut off: but they that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the land.
- 10 † For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: and thou shalt seek his place, and shalt not find it.
- 11 But the meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight in abundance of peace.
- 12 † The sinner shall watch the just man: and shall gnash upon him with his teeth.
- 13 But the Lord shall laugh at him: for he foreseeth that his day shall come,
- 14 † The wicked have drawn out the sword: they have bent their bow. To cast down the poor and needy, to kill the upright of heart.
- 15 Let their sword enter into their own hearts, and let their bow be broken.
- 16 † Better is the little to the just, than the great riches of the wicked.
- 17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken in pieces; but the Lord strengtheneth the just.

- 18 ' Novit Dominus dies im- 18 ' The Lord knoweth the
maculatorum, days of the undefiled;
et hereditas eorum in and their inheritance shall
æternum erit. be for ever.
- 19 Non confundentur in tem- 19 They shall not be con-
pore malo, founded in the evil time;
et in diebus famis satura- and in the days of famine
buntur, they shall be filled:
- 20 3 Quia ¹ peccatores peri- 20 3 because the wicked shall
bunt. perish.
Inimici vero Domini mox And the enemies of the
ut honorificati fuerint Lord, presently after
et exaltati, they shall be honored
and exalted,
deficientes quemadmo- shall come to nothing and
dum fumus deficient. vanish like smoke.
- 21 5 Mutuabitur peccator, et 21 5 The sinner shall borrow,
non solvet, and not pay again;
justus autem miseretur et but the just sheweth
tribuet; mercy and shall give.
- 22 Quia benedicentes ei here- 22 For such as bless him shall
ditabunt terram: inherit the land:
maledicentes autem ei dis- but such as curse him shall
peribunt. perish.
- 23 2 Apud Dominum gressus 23 2 With the Lord shall the
hominis dirigentur; steps of a man be di-
rected,
et viam ejus volet. and he shall like well his
way.
- 24 Cum ceciderit, non collide- 24 When he shall fall he shall
tur, not be bruised,
quia Dominus supponit for the Lord putteth his
manum suam. hand under him.
- 25 3 Junior fui, etenim senui; 25 3 I have been young, and
now am old;
et non vidi justum dere- and I have not seen the
lictum. just forsaken,
nec semen ejus quærens nor his seed seeking bread.
panem.

¹ "Quia" is redundant. Cf. Intro. pp. 31, 32.

- 26 Tota die miseretur et com-
modat;
et semen illius in bene-
dictione erit.
- 26 He sheweth mercy, and
lendeth all the day long;
and his seed shall be in
blessing.
- 27 D Declina a malo, et fac
bonum,
et inhabita in sæculum
sæculi;
- 27 D Decline from evil, and do
good,
and dwell for ever and
ever.
- 28 Quia Dominus amat judi-
cium,
et non derelinquet sanctos
suos;
in æternum conservabun-
tur.
- 28 For the Lord loveth judg-
ment,
and will not forsake his
saints:
they shall be preserved for
ever.
- Y Injusti punientur,
et semen impiorum peri-
bit.
- Y The unjust shall be pun-
ished,
and the seed of the wicked
shall perish.
- 29 Justi autem hereditabunt
terram,
et inhabitabunt in sæcu-
lum sæculi super eam.
- 29 But the just shall inherit
the land,
and shall dwell therein for
evermore.
- 30 D Os justi meditabitur sa-
pientiam,
et lingua ejus loquetur
judicium.
- 30 D The mouth of the just
shall meditate wisdom:
and his tongue shall speak
judgment.
- 31 Lex Dei ejus in corde ip-
sius,
et non supplantabuntur
gressus ejus.
- 31 The law of his God is in
his heart,
and his steps shall not be
supplanted.
- 32 Y Considerat peccator jus-
tum,
et querit mortificare eum.
- 32 Y The wicked watcheth the
just man,
and seeketh to put him to
death.
- 33 Dominus autem non dere-
linquet eum in manibus
ejus,
nec damnabit eum cum
judicabitur illi.
- 33 But the Lord will not
leave him in his hands;
nor condemn him when he
shall be judged.
- 34 P Expecta Dominum, et
custodi viam ejus;
- 34 P Expect the Lord and keep
his way:

et exaltabit te ut hereditate capias terram;
cum perierint peccatores, videbis.

and he will exalt thee to inherit the land:
When the sinners shall perish thou shalt see.

35 ַ Vidi impium superexaltatum,
et elevatum sicut cedros Libani.

35 ַ I have seen the wicked highly exalted,
and lifted up like the cedars of Libanus.

36 Et transivi, et ecce non erat;
et quæsi eum, et non est inventus locus ejus.

36 And I passed by, and lo, he was not:
and I sought him and his place was not found.

37 ֿ Custodi innocentiam, et vidi æquitatem,
quoniam sunt reliquiæ homini pacifico.

37 ֿ Keep innocence, and behold justice:
for there are remnants for the peaceable man.

38 Injusti autem disperibunt simul;
reliquiæ impiorum interibunt.

38 But the unjust shall be destroyed together:
the remnants of the wicked shall perish.

39 ַ Salus autem justorum a Domino;
et protector eorum in tempore tribulationis.

39 ַ But the salvation of the just is from the Lord,
and he is their protector in the time of trouble.

40 Et adjuvabit eos Dominus, et liberabit eos;
et eruet eos a peccatoribus, et salvabit eos,

40 And the Lord will help them and deliver them:
and he will rescue them from the wicked, and save them,
because they have hoped in him.

quia speraverunt in eo.

PSALM XXXVI

THE underlying thought of the whole psalm is expressed in the opening verses. "Be not vexed at the prosperity of the ungodly, for it shall quickly come to nought. Trust in God, do good, and He will bless thee."

"This thought is not developed in ordinary strophes, but in shorter utterances of the proverbial form following the order of the letters of the alphabet, and not without some repetitions and recurrences to a previous thought, in order to impress it still more convincingly and deeply upon the mind."¹

Synopsis.—Envy not the prosperity of the wicked for it shall quickly pass away (1, 2). Trust in God and do good and He will reward thee (3-7a). Be not troubled at the prosperity of the wicked, for they shall soon perish, but the just shall enjoy a long and happy life (7b-11). In vain do the wicked plot against the righteous, for their evil designs shall be turned to their own destruction (12-15). The lot of the just may seem miserable, yet it is far better than the apparent prosperity of the wicked (16-22), because God ever favors and protects the just (23-33). Trust in God and await the outcome, for justice will at length be meted out to all, both good and bad (34-40).

Verses 1, 2.—Be not incensed at the prosperity of the wicked; be not envious of evil-doers. Make not such comparisons of thy lot with that of the wicked as to unduly excite thyself with a sense of injustice and wrong. "The reason why this excitement should be avoided is a practical one: it is needless; the situation will be of brief duration,"² for the wicked shall wither and fade like the grass and the green herbs.

The sacred writers frequently compare the riches and pleasures of this world to grass and flowers

¹ Delitzsch.

² Briggs.

that spring up and quickly fade away and die. Cf. Ps. cii. 15; cxxviii. 6; Is. xl. 6.

Verse 3.—As a remedy against such envy and complaint, the Psalmist exhorts the faithful to have confidence in the justice of God, and to do good. On this condition they shall dwell in peace and security in the Land of Promise, and enjoy its abundant riches. They shall be as a flock of the Lord led to green pastures.

Verse 3b in Hebrew is variously rendered: "Inhabit the land and pasture in confidence";¹ "pasture in safety";² "dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness."³

Verse 4.—"Rejoice in the service of God and place thy happiness in Him instead of in earthly riches and pleasures, and He will grant thee the desires of thy heart."

Verses 5, 6.—"Commit thyself, thy cares and anxieties, to the Lord and trust in Him. He will do for thee what thou desirest—He will bring thee out of the darkness of adversity; He will set thee in the light of happiness and prosperity; He will make thy innocence and justice to shine forth like the noonday sun."

The Septuagint mistook "*galal*," "to roll," for "*galah*" "to reveal," thus making verse 5 read as in the Vulgate: "*Revela Domino viam tuam*" instead of "*devolve ad Dominum viam tuam*."

Verse 7.—Be resigned to the will of God and pray to Him; or, as the Hebrew reads: "*Wait for Him*," i.e., "look to Him with confidence for help in time of need"; or, "patiently bear adversities until

¹ Briggs.

² Baethgen.

³ Duhm, Delitzsch, Revised Version.

God sees fit to manifest His justice. In the mean time be not envious of the wicked who prospers in his undertakings (in his way)."

Verses 8, 9.—Do not allow yourself to be vexed and angered at the prosperity of the wicked; have no desire to imitate them, or to share their lot, for they shall be cut off, but the just—those that wait upon the Lord, those that trust in Him—shall possess the land in peace and prosperity.

In the Hebrew text verse 8 reads: "*Cease from anger and let go wrath; be not incensed, it leads only to evil-doing.*"

Verses 10, 11.—These verses repeat the thought of verse 9. The wicked shall soon be destroyed, but the afflicted who patiently bear with their lot shall possess the land and rejoice in abundant peace and prosperity.

Verses 12, 13.—The just are exposed to the hatred of the wicked who plot their ruin, and, like wild beasts, gnash their teeth in anger and rage. The Lord who protects the just only laughs at the enraged schemer, for He foresees the day of visitation—the day of death and retribution.

Verses 14, 15.—These two verses further develop the thought of verses 12, 13. The wicked make use of every means to harass and destroy the just, but all to no purpose for their machinations shall be their own ruin. They have drawn the sword; they have trodden the bow to strike down the afflicted—the upright of heart. The sword shall pierce their own hearts and their bows shall be broken.

Verses 16, 17.—The Psalmist has shown that the power of sinners and their schemes are no cause for

alarm; he now shows that their riches and influence should be little esteemed by men of prudence.¹

Better is the little that the just man possesses than the great wealth of sinners, because the just man enjoys the friendship and protection of God; whereas sinners will soon receive just punishment for their iniquity and all their wealth and prestige will vanish.

In verse 16b Briggs renders the Hebrew word "*hamon*," "*noise*," "*uproar*," instead of "*riches*."² This gives a different meaning to the passage and one that is well suited to the context. "Better is the little strength of the just than the noise and tumult of the ungodly, for the Lord will break the power (arms) of the wicked, but He protects and sustains the righteous."

Verses 18, 19.—The Lord looks upon the just with favor and secures them in the peaceful enjoyment of their possessions. They shall not be disappointed in an evil time. Even should famine rage in the land they shall have enough and to spare.

Verse 20.—Quite different, the fate of sinners! The wicked enemies of God, even while being honored and exalted, shall vanish like smoke. The downfall of sinners shall quickly follow their prosperity and advancement.

The Hebrew text is unintelligible. It is variously rendered. "The enemies of the Lord shall be as *the fat of lambs*"³—*the glory of the meadows*⁴—*the glorying of unicorns*.⁵

¹ Agellius.

² In Psalms xli. 5 and lxiv. 8, (Hebr. text) "*hamon*" means "*uproar*," "*tumult*." In Is. lx. 5 and Eccles. v. 9 it means "*riches*," "*abundance*."

³ Authorized version.

⁴ Delitzsch.

⁵ St. Jerome.

Verses 21, 22.—The sinner shall be brought to such poverty and degradation that he will be forced to borrow and will not be able to repay. On the contrary, the just shall enjoy such an abundance that he can freely give to those who are in need. The righteous shall enjoy an abundance because the just—those who bless God—shall inherit the land; but the wicked—those who curse God—shall be destroyed.

In Hebrew verse 22 reads: *“For they that are blessed of Him shall inherit the land, and they that are cursed of Him shall be cut off.”*

Verse 23, 24.—The steps of the just man are directed, or rightly ordered, by the Lord and He looks upon him (his way) with favor. Should the just man fall through error or misfortune he shall not be injured, for the hand of the Lord protects him.

The Hebrew reads: *“By the Lord are the steps of a man established; and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholds his hand.”*

Verses 25, 26.—The Psalmist gives his own experience in regard to God's care for the righteous. “I am now an old man, yet during my whole life I have never seen a just man forsaken by God. He may suffer reverses and misfortunes, yet sooner or later prosperity will return, and his children will not be left destitute—begging bread. He is so prosperous that he can give with a generous hand at all times and leave an abundance to his children. They shall be prosperous—in blessing.” Or, “they shall be a blessing to others by being able to imitate the generosity of their father.¹”

¹ Cf. commentary on Psalm xxxiii. (9-11), page 250.

Verses 27, 28a.—“Therefore thou shouldst turn from evil and do good, that thou mayest enjoy thy possessions in peace and security throughout a long and happy life, because God loves the practice of uprightness (judgment) and will not forsake the righteous. They shall be ever under His care and protection.”

Verses 28b, 29.—The wicked shall be punished and their posterity shall perish, but the just shall inherit the land and dwell in it forever in peace and security.

“*The wicked shall be punished*” is not found in the Hebrew text. It gives a fine antithesis with verse 29 and supplies the *ayin* (י) verse that is lacking in Hebrew.

Verses 30, 31.—The just man is ever prudent and upright in all his words because he keeps before him the law of God which enlightens the eyes and gives wisdom to little ones. Therefore he can not be tripped up by the wiles of the wicked.

The Hebrew reads: “*None of his steps shall slide,*” i.e., he shall walk secure in the path of prosperity.

Verses 32, 33.—The wicked treacherously spy upon the just man and seek to entrap him in some violation of the Law that will involve a judicial investigation. They hope to bring him to an untimely end by involving him in some crime for which the penalty is death. But God will not leave him to the mercy of his enemies. The Lord himself takes control of the proceedings, and when judgment is pronounced the just man shall be declared innocent.¹

¹ Card. Bellarmine; Briggs.

Verse 34.—“ Let the eye of faith directed hopefully to Yahveh go on its way, without suffering thyself to be turned aside by the persecution and condemnation of the world, then He will at length raise thee out of all trouble, and cause thee to possess the land.”¹ “When sinners are cut off and destroyed then wilt thou see the vanity of their short-lived prosperity.”

Verses 35, 36.—The Psalmist, now an old man, relates his experience in regard to the wicked. “I have seen the ungodly lifted up like the cedars of Lebanon: I have seen such a one raised to the highest pinnacle of prosperity and fame, only to be cast down and quickly brought to nothing. He was even as some grand spectacle which I passed by and then turned to look again and lo! it was no more. I even sought the place where it had been and found no trace.”

The Hebrew reads: “*I have seen the wicked man terrifying and spreading himself like a green untransplanted tree. He passed by and lo! he was not! Yea I sought him but he could not be found.*”

St. Jerome renders it: “I have seen the ungodly man strong and in full vigor like a green tree in its native soil.”

Verses 37, 38.—“Keep thyself blameless and look to what is upright in thy dealings with others, for the man of peace shall have a posterity as his reward, but the unjust shall be completely destroyed; even their posterity shall be cut off.”

The Hebrew word “*acharîth*” here rendered “*reliquiae*,” “*remnants*,” may mean “*end*,” “*issue*,” “*posterity*,” “*reward*,” “*future*.” St. Jerome ren-

¹ Delitzsch.

ders the passage thus: "Keep singlemindedness, look to what is upright; for in the end a good man shall have peace."

Knabenbauer interprets the passage thus: "If you wish your prosperity to be lasting, maintain innocence and look to what is upright. Such a one is the man of peace and he shall have a long and happy future. On the other hand, the wicked shall be destroyed; no future prosperity awaits them."¹

The Hebrew text reads: "*Mark the blameless man and behold the upright; that a man of peace has a posterity. As for transgressors, they shall be destroyed altogether; the posterity of the wicked is cut off,*" i.e., "learn from your own observation that the righteous are rewarded and the wicked punished."

Verses 39, 40.—The happiness and prosperity of the just is from God. He is also their protector in time of trouble. He gives them help in time of need and delivers them from the power of the wicked. He aids them and protects them because they have placed their trust in Him.

¹ Freely translated.

PSALMUS XXXVII

(HEB. XXXVIII)

- 1 Psalmus David, in rememorationem de sabbato.

- 2 Domine, ne in furore tuo arguas me,
neque in ira tua corripas me;

- 3 Quoniam sagittæ tuæ infixæ sunt mihi,
et confirmasti super me manum tuam.

- 4 Non est sanitas in carne mea, a facie iræ tuæ;

non est pax ossibus meis, a facie peccatorum meorum.
- 5 Quoniam iniquitates meæ supergressæ sunt caput meum,
et sicut onus grave gravatæ sunt super me.

- 6 Putruerunt et corruptæ sunt cicatrices meæ,
a facie insipientiæ meæ.
- 7 Miser factus sum, et curvatus sum usque in finem;

tota die contristatus ingrediebar.

- 8 Quoniam lumbi mei impleti sunt illusionibus,
et non est sanitas in carne mea.

PSALM XXXVII

(HEB. XXXVIII)

- 1 A psalm for David, for a remembrance of the Sabbath.

- 2 Rebuke me not, O Lord, in thy indignation;
nor chastise me in thy wrath.

- 3 For thy arrows are fastened in me:
and thy hand hath been strong upon me.

- 4 There is no health in my flesh, because of thy wrath:
there is no peace for my bones, because of my sins.
- 5 For my iniquities are gone over my head:

and as a heavy burden are become heavy upon me.

- 6 My sores are putrefied and corrupted,
because of my foolishness.
- 7 I am become miserable, and am bowed down even to the end:
I walked sorrowful all the day long.

- 8 For my loins are filled with illusions;
and there is no health in my flesh.

- 9 Afflictus sum, et humiliatus sum nimis;
ruebam a gemitu cordis mei.
- 9 I am afflicted and humbled exceedingly:
I roared with the groaning of my heart.
- 10 Domine, ante te omne desiderium meum,
et gemitus meus a te non est absconditus.
- 10 Lord, all my desire is before thee,
and my groaning is not hidden from thee.
- 11 Cor meum conturbatum est, dereliquit me virtus mea,
et lumen oculorum meorum, et ipsum non est mecum.
- 11 My heart is troubled, my strength hath left me,
and the light of my eyes itself is not with me.
- 12 Amici mei et proximi mei adversum me appropinquaverunt, et steterunt;
et qui juxta me erant, de longe steterunt.
- 12 My friends and my neighbors have drawn near, and stood against me.
And they that were near me stood afar off:
- 13 Et vim faciebant qui querebant animam meam.
Et qui inquirebant mala mihi, locuti sunt vanitates, et dolos tota die meditabantur.
- 13 And they that sought my soul used violence.
And they that sought evils to me spoke vain things, and studied deceits all the day long.
- 14 Ego autem, tamquam surdus, non audiebam;
et sicut mutus non aperiens os suum.
- 14 But I, as a deaf man, heard not:
and as a dumb man not opening his mouth.
- 15 Et factus sum sicut homo non audiens,
et non habens in ore suo redargutiones.
- 15 And I became as a man that heareth not:
and that hath no reproofs in his mouth.
- 16 Quoniam in te, Domine, speravi;
tu exaudies me, Domine Deus meus.
- 16 For in thee, O Lord, have I hoped;
thou wilt hear me, O Lord my God.
- 17 Quia dixi: Nequando supergaudeant mihi inimici mei;
et dum commoventur pedes mei, super me magna locuti sunt.
- 17 For I said: Lest at any time my enemies rejoice over me:
and whilst my feet are moved, they speak great things against me.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 18 Quoniam ego in flagella
paratus sum,
et dolor meus in conspectu
meo semper. | 18 For I am ready for scourges:

and my sorrow is contin-
ually before me. |
| 19 Quoniam iniquitatem meam
annuntiabo;
et cogitabo pro peccato meo. | 19 For I will declare my iniquity:
and I will think for my sin. |
| 20 Inimici autem mei vivunt
et confirmati sunt super
me;
et multiplicati sunt qui
oderunt me inique. | 20 But my enemies live, and
are stronger than I:

and they that hate me
wrongfully are multiplied. |
| 21 Qui retribuunt mala pro
bonis detrahebant mihi,
quoniam sequebar bonita-
tem. | 21 They that render evil for
good, have detracted me,
because I followed good-
ness. |
| 22 Ne derelinquas me, Domine
Deus meus;
ne discesseris a me. | 22 Forsake me not, O Lord my
God:
do not thou depart from me. |
| 23 Intende in adjutorium
meum,
Domine, Deus salutis meæ. | 23 Attend unto my help,

O Lord, the God of my sal-
vation. |

PSALM XXXVII

THIS is the third Penitential Psalm. "Sickness, mental anguish, persecution sent in chastisement of sin are the burden of this psalm, which opens with the same words as *Ps. vi.* What particular sin or sins were thus visited is uncertain . . . His (David's) sin with the wife of Urias will here suggest itself. The grief and anxiety he suffered, while the fruit of his criminal connection was hovering between life and death may well have resulted in bodily disease.¹ But the poet complains of 'them that hate him wrongfully' (20); of those 'that oppose him be-

¹ Cf. 2 Kings xii. 16 et seq.

cause he pursued good' We are thus reduced to conjectures." ¹

Synopsis. The Psalmist beseeches God to temper His justice with mercy (2, 3). He describes the pains he suffers in punishment for his sins (4-9). He reminds God, as it were, of his patience in bearing with affliction and with the vexations of his enemies (10-15). He prays with confidence for divine assistance that his enemies may not prevail against him (16-23).

Verse 1.—"*For a remembrance*" probably indicates that the psalm was to be sung during the memorial sacrifice described in *Leviticus* ii. 2, 9, 16. The Septuagint and Vulgate add the words "*of the Sabbath*" which may mean that the psalm was used in the liturgy on the Sabbath.

Verses 2, 3.—The Psalmist begs God to temper His justice with mercy. "Punish me not according to Thy justice but rather show mercy, for I am sore distressed. Thou hast made Thy arrows (suffering and sorrows) sink in deeply; Thou hast made me feel the weight of Thy avenging hand."

Verses 4-9.—"There is no soundness left in my body; my very bones are disquieted. My wounds stink and fester; I am wretched; I am bent to the extreme with suffering and sorrow. I go about mourning all day long. My loins are filled with feverish pains; there is no soundness left in my flesh. I am greatly afflicted and sore oppressed. With groans and cries do I give utterance to my anguish of heart."

This distressing condition is the result of God's

¹ M'Swiney.

wrath and indignation, against the sins of the poet which he describes as a flood threatening destruction, and a heavy burden crushing him to earth (verse 5).

The Hebrew text of verse 8a is usually rendered: "*My loins are filled with burning,*" i.e., inflamed or feverish wounds. The Septuagint, Vulgate, and St. Jerome render it: "*My loins are filled with mockings (ignominy).*" Dr. Briggs follows the same idea in his rendering: "'*Yea, my loins are full of that which is contemned,*' regarded as ignominious, disgraceful, thinking, probably, of physical weakness in the seat of strength, which is more in accord with the ancient version, and is more suited to the parallelism."

Verses 10, 11.—Having bewailed his sufferings before God, the Psalmist goes on in a somewhat calmer tone; it is the calm of weariness and of the rescue which he confidently hopes for. He has complained, but not as if it were necessary to make God acquainted with his suffering; the Omniscient One is directly cognizant of every wish that his suffering extorts from him, and even his softer sighing does not escape His knowledge.¹ As if to arouse the divine compassion David proceeds to picture his pitiable condition. "My heart throbs with anguish, my strength fails me, and my eyes are dimmed from sorrow and weeping."

Verses 12, 13.—"Friends and neighbors, on whom I thought to rely for sympathy and aid, stand aloof from me as from one stricken with a plague. They abandon me to my fate. My enemies, taking advantage of my hapless condition, seek to bring

¹ Adapted from Delitzsch.

about my complete ruin by violence (Heb. *snares*) and calumnies."

Verses 14, 15.—"Consciousness of guilt and resignation to the will of God made me patient under all their insolence. I gave no heed to their calumnies; made them no answer. I was as one deaf and dumb; *I will bear the wrath of the Lord because I have sinned against Him.*"¹

Verses 16, 17.—"I know that Thou wilt hear me, for I have placed my trust in Thee. I have besought Thee saying: Deliver me, O Lord, lest my enemies have occasion to rejoice at my undoing (when my feet are moved)." The Septuagint reads: "Let them not rejoice over me, for if they boast at my stumbling merely, what can I expect at their hands if I were utterly undone?"²

Verses 18, 19.—The reading of the Vulgate seems to mean that the Psalmist is ready and willing to accept whatever punishment his sins deserve and that he is truly sorry for them. He will confess his iniquity and think of his sins with anxiety and sorrow.

A comparison with the Hebrew shows that it means rather: "I suffer scourges and I am continually troubled, but I acknowledge that I have sinned and justly deserve all my afflictions, and I reflect upon my sins with anxiety."

The Hebrew reads: "*For I am ready to fall, and my great sorrow is ever before me. For I will declare my iniquity; I will fear on account of my sin.*" This gives the reason of his petition for help in verses 16, 17. "Help me, O Lord, for I am prone to fall and so I am never free from grief and pain. I con-

¹ Micheas vii. 9.

² M'Swiney.

fess my iniquity and I meditate upon my sin with anxiety."

Verses 20, 21.—These verses give another reason for the confidence expressed in verse 16. "Thou wilt help me, O Lord, for my enemies are prosperous and stronger than I. Many are they that hate me without cause. They have repaid me evil for good; they are hostile toward me because I seek to do good."

David acknowledges that he is a sinner against God, but he has always done good to others, even to his enemies. He has never given way to anger and hatred. For this reason he can say that he has followed goodness, but his enemies have opposed him and returned evil for good.

Verses 22, 23.—The Psalmist closes with sighs for help. No lighting up of the darkness of wrath takes place. Suppliant faith does not give way to faith triumphant, but the closing words, "*O Lord my salvation*," show where the repentance of Cain differs from that of David. True repentance has faith within itself; it despairs of self but trusts in God.¹

¹ Adapted from Delitzsch.

PSALMUS XXXVIII

(HEB. XXXIX)

- 1 In finem, ipsi Idithun, Canticum David.
- 2 Dixi: Custodiam vias meas,
ut non delinquam in lingua mea.
Posui ori meo custodiam
cum consisteret peccator adversum me.
- 3 Obmutui, et humiliatus sum,
et silui a bonis;

et dolor meus renovatus est.
- 4 Concaluit cor meum intra me;
et in meditatione mea exardescet ignis.
Locutus sum in lingua mea:

Notum fac mihi, Domine,
finem meum,
et numerum dierum meorum
quis est,
ut sciam quid desit mihi.
- 6 Ecce mensurabiles posuisti dies meos,
et substantia mea tamquam nihilum ante te.
Verumtamen universa vanitas, omnis homo vivens.
Selah.
- 7 Verumtamen in imagine pertransit homo;

PSALM XXXVIII

(HEB. XXXIX)

- 1 Unto the end, for Idithun himself, a canticle of David.
- 2 I said: I will take heed to my ways:
that I sin not with my tongue.
I have set a guard to my mouth,
when the sinner stood against me.
- 3 I was dumb, and was humbled, and kept silence from good things:
and my sorrow was renewed.
- 4 My heart grew hot within me:
and in my meditation a fire shall flame out.
I spoke with my tongue:

O Lord, make me know my end.
And what is the number of my days:
that I may know what is wanting to me.
- 6 Behold thou hast made my days measurable:
and my substance is as nothing before thee.
And indeed all things are vanity: every man living.
Selah.
- 7 Surely man passeth as an image:

sed et frustra conturbatur.

Thesaurizat, et ignorat cui
congregabit ea.

8 Et nunc quæ est expecta-
tio mea? nonne Dominus?
et substantia mea apud te
est.

9 Ab omnibus iniquitatibus
meis erue me:
opprobrium insipienti de-
disti me.

10 Obmutui, et non aperui os
meum,
quoniam tu fecisti;

11 amove a me plagas tuas.

A fortitudine manus tuæ
ego defeci in increpation-
ibus;

12 propter iniquitatem corri-
puisti hominem.

Et tabescere fecisti sicut
araneam animam ejus;

verumtamen vane contur-
batur omnis homo. Se-
lah.

13 Exaudi orationem meam,
Domine, et deprecationem
meam;

auribus percipe lacrymas
meas.

Ne sileas, quoniam advena
ego sum apud te,
et peregrinus sicut omnes
patres mei.

14 Remitte mihi, ut refrigerer

priusquam abeam et am-
plius non ero.

yea, and he is disquieted in
vain.

He storeth up: and he
knoweth not for whom he
shall gather these things.

8 And now what is my hope?
is it not the Lord?
and my substance is with
thee.

9 Deliver thou me from all my
iniquities:
thou hast made me a re-
proach to the fool.

10 I was dumb, and I opened
not my mouth,
because thou hast done it.

11 Remove thy scourges from
me.

The strength of thy hand
hath made me faint in
rebukes:

12 thou hast corrected man for
iniquity.

And thou hast made his soul
to waste away like a
spider:

surely in vain is any man
disquieted. Selah.

13 Hear my prayer, O Lord,
and my supplication:

give ear to my tears.

Be not silent: for I am a
stranger with thee,
and a sojourner as all my
fathers were.

14 O forgive me, that I may be
refreshed,
before I go hence, and be
no more.

PSALM XXXVIII

Synopsis.—The Psalmist resolves to suffer in silence (2-5a). He begs God to show him how fleeting is the life of man and all things transitory (5b-7). In consequence he puts his trust in God and prays for forgiveness (8-12). He beseeches God to hear his earnest prayers (13, 14).

Verse 1.—Idithun was probably one of the three choirmasters appointed to sing the praises of God.¹ The title should probably be: "A psalm of David for Idithun (the choirmaster, or chief musician)."

Verses 2-5a.—It seems that the Psalmist was surrounded by prosperous enemies who jeered him on account of the misfortunes he was suffering in punishment for sin (cf. 11, 12). He resolved to bear patiently with them in silence and not give way to angry words and reproaches. "I resolved to be careful in all my actions and to guard my mouth when the wicked reproached (stood against)² me, lest I might sin. I remained silent and humbled myself beneath my afflictions. I refrained from making even a just defence, but the more I tried to repress my feelings so much the more were they aroused. Whilst brooding over my miserable plight my heart burned within me; in my ardor I sought relief in speech."

Verse 3a in Hebrew reads: "*I was dumb in silence,*" instead of "*I was dumb and was humbled.*" On the word "*dumiyyah,*" here rendered "silence," cf. Ps. xxi. 2.

¹ 1 Par. xvi. 38; 2 Par. v. 12.

² Heb. "*Stood before me,*" i.e., "in my presence."

"*I kept silent from good things*" is obscure. It may be taken to mean: "I refrained from saying anything, either good or bad; I did not even make a just defence of myself." It may also mean: "I held my peace without good," i.e., "I held my peace but without getting any relief thereby; nay rather was my pain intensified." Delitzsch renders it thus: "I held my peace taking no note of prosperity," viz., of the wicked.

Verses 5b-7.—When the Psalmist at length gives voice to his pent-up feelings it is not in malediction against his enemies nor in complaint of his afflictions. He turns to God in resignation and prays Him to make known the end of all his suffering.

"O Lord, grant me to know the end of my life and its sufferings. Show me the measure of my days that I may know how many are still before me" (Heb. "*that I may know how frail,*" or, "*how fleeting I am*"). "Thou hast made my days but a span (measurable by a hand's breadth); yea, my life is as nothing in Thy sight. Of a truth every man living is nought but vanity" (Heb. "*a breath*"): "as the phantom of a dream does he pass away. In vain does he bustle about storing up riches, and knows not to whom he shall leave them" (Heb. "*He knows not who will gather them*").

Verses 8-12.—"Since all things human are but an empty fleeting show, to whom shall I turn for relief if not to Thee, O Lord? Upon Thee is all my reliance (substance). Deliver me from the sins for which Thou hast afflicted me and made me an object of reproach¹ to the unbelieving. I was

¹ Hebrew, "*Make me not a reproach to the profane.*" This gives a better parallelism.

aware that my woes were sent by Thee, hence I replied not to the railings of mine enemies. Remove from me the scourges of affliction, for I am ready to faint away beneath the weight of Thy chastening hand.¹ When Thou dost correct a man for iniquity Thou dost make him (his soul) waste away through affliction until he becomes emaciated like unto a spider."

The Hebrew gives a better meaning: "*When Thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth,*" i.e., his bodily beauty molds away like a moth-eaten garment.

The thought of verse 7 is repeated as a refrain. "*Surely in vain is any man disquieted*" (Heb. "*Only a breath are all men*").

Verses 13, 14.—The Psalmist returns to his prayer for forgiveness. "Hear my prayer, O Lord; hearken to my petition: be not unmoved by my tears, for I am a stranger and a sojourner in Thy land as were all my fathers, and as such I implore Thy protection and care."

We find the same thought in the prayer of David, 1 Par. xxix. 15: "*For we are sojourners before Thee, and strangers, as were all our fathers.*"

"Forgive me that I may have some relief from affliction before I die."

The Hebrew reads: "*Look away from me, that I may rally before I go hence and am no more,*" i.e., "Turn away Thy angry countenance; have mercy on me."

¹ Hebrew: "*Take away from me Thy stroke, Before the blow of Thy hand I must perish.*"

PSALMUS XXXIX

(HEB. XL)

- 1 In finem, Psalmus ipsi David.
- 2 Expectans, expectavi Dominum,
- 3 et intendit mihi. Et exaudivit preces meas, et eduxit me de lacu miseriæ et de luto fæcis.

Et statuit super petram pedes meos, et direxit gressus meos.

- 4 Et immisit in os meum canticum novum, carmen Deo nostro.
- Videbunt multi, et timebunt, et sperabunt in Domino.

- 5 Beatus vir cujus est nomen Domini spes ejus,
- et non respexit in vanitates et insanias falsas.

- 6 Multa fecisti tu, Domine Deus meus, mirabilia tua;
- et cogitationibus tuis non est qui similis sit tibi.
- Annuntiavi et locutus sum: multiplicati sunt super numerum.

- 7 Sacrificium et oblationem noluisti;

PSALM XXXIX

(HEB. XL)

- 1 Unto the end, a psalm for David himself.
- 2 With expectation I have waited for the Lord,
- 3 and he was attentive to me. And he heard my prayers, and brought me out of the pit of misery and the mire of dregs.
- And he set my feet upon a rock, and directed my steps.
- 4 And he put a new canticle into my mouth, a song to our God.
- Many shall see, and shall fear: and they shall hope in the Lord.

- 5 Blessed is the man whose trust is in the name of the Lord;
- and who hath not had regard to vanities, and lying follies.
- 6 Thou hast multiplied thy wonderful works, O Lord my God:
- and in thy thoughts there is no one like to thee.
- I have declared and I have spoken: they are multiplied above number.

- 7 Sacrifice and oblation thou didst not desire;

- aures autem perfecisti mihi.
 but thou hast pierced ears
 for me.
- Holocaustum et pro peccato
 non postulasti;
 Burnt offering and sin offer-
 ing thou didst not re-
 quire:
- 8 tunc dixi: Ecce venio.
 8 then said I: Behold I come.
 In capite libri scriptum est
 In the head of the book it
 de me,
 is written of me
- 9 ut facerem voluntatem tu-
 9 that I should do thy will:
 am. Deus meus, volui,
 O my God, I have desired
 it,
 et legem tuam in medio
 and thy law in the midst of
 cordis mei.
 my heart.
- 10 Annuntiavi justitiam tuam
 10 I have declared thy justice
 in ecclesia magna,
 in a great church,
 ecce labia mea non prohibe-
 lo, I will not restrain my
 bo; Domine, tu scisti.
 lips: O Lord, thou know-
 est it.
- 11 Justitiam tuam non abscon-
 11 I have not hid thy justice
 di in corde meo;
 within my heart:
 veritatem tuam et salutare
 I have declared thy truth
 tuum dixi;
 and thy salvation.
 non abscondi misericordiam
 I have not concealed thy
 tuam et veritatem tuam
 mercy and thy truth from
 a concilio multo.
 a great council.
- 12 Tu autem, Domine, ne
 12 Withhold not thou, O Lord,
 longe facias miserationes
 thy tender mercies from
 tuas a me;
 me:
 misericordia tua et veritas
 thy mercy and thy truth
 tua semper susceperunt
 have always upheld me.
 me.
- 13 Quoniam circumdederunt me
 13 For evils without number
 mala quorum non est
 have surrounded me:
 numerus;
 my iniquities have over-
 comprehenderunt me iniqui-
 taken me, and I was not
 tates meæ, et non potui
 able to see.
 ut viderem.
 They are multiplied above
 Multiplicati sunt super ca-
 the hairs of my head:
 pillos capitis mei,
 and my heart hath forsaken
 et cor meum dereliquit me.
 me.
- 14 Complaceat tibi, Domine,
 14 Be pleased, O Lord, to de-
 ut eruas me;
 liver me:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Domine, ad adjuvandum me
respice. | look down, O Lord, to help
me. |
| 15 Confundantur et reve-
reantur simul, qui quæ-
runt animam meam, ut aufe-
rant eam. | 15 Let them be confounded and
ashamed together, that
seek after my soul to
take it away. |
| Convertantur retrorsum et
revereantur, qui volunt
mihi mala. | Let them be turned back-
ward and be ashamed
that desire evils to me. |
| 16 Ferant confestim confusio-
nem suam, qui dicunt
mihi: Euge, euge! | 16 Let them immediately bear
their confusion, that say
to me: 'Tis well, 'Tis
well. |
| 17 Exultent et lætentur super
te omnes quærentes te,
et dicant semper: Magni-
ficetur Dominus, qui dili-
gunt salutare tuum. | 17 Let all that seek thee re-
joice and be glad in thee:
and let such as love thy
salvation say always: The
Lord be magnified. |
| 18 Ego autem mendicus sum
et pauper;
Dominus sollicitus est mei.
Adjutor meus et protector
meus tu es;
Deus meus, ne tardaveris. | 18 But I am a beggar and poor:
the Lord is careful for me.
Thou art my helper and my
protector:
O my God, be not slack. |

PSALM XXXIX

Synopsis.—The Psalmist praises God for deliverance from some great danger (2–4), and proclaims the happiness of those that trust in Him (5), for His mercies are without number (6). In thanksgiving the Psalmist vows to delight in doing the will of God (7, 8); and to publish abroad His mercies (10, 11). He then prays for further deliverance (12, 13), and for the defeat of all his enemies (14–18).

Verses 14–18 are repeated with some slight changes as Psalm lxix. It is not certain whether this psalm is composed of two separate psalms

(1-13 and 14-18), or whether verses 14-18 were detached for liturgical reasons to form Psalm lxi.

St. Paul explains verses 7-9 as a prophecy or figure of Christ abolishing the sacrifices of the Old Law and instituting that of the New.¹ The whole psalm may be referred to Christ in a typical sense.

Verses 1-4.—“In my distress, I eagerly awaited the assistance of God, and my prayers were answered. God delivered me from the dangers that threatened destruction (*“pit of misery”*—*“mire of dregs”*), and set me in safety as if upon a high rock out of harm’s way; He directed my steps in a path of security. He put a new canticle into my mouth, i.e., He gave me new reasons to chant His praises. Many who saw how I was delivered by the mercy of God were led to worship Him and put their trust in Him.”

Verse 5.—“Rightly did they trust in God for happy is the man that puts his trust in the name of the Lord, and turns not aside to vain idols and their mad follies.”

The Hebrew reads: “*Blessed is the man who maketh Yahveh his trust and does not turn to the proud and lying apostates.*”

Verse 6.—“Truly happy are they who trust in Thee, O Lord, for many are the wonderful things Thou hast wrought in behalf of Thy chosen people. In Thy designs in our regard there is none to be compared with Thee.” “God’s doings toward Israel were from of old a fulness of wondrous deeds and plans of deliverance, which was ever realizing and revealing itself.”²

¹ Heb. x. 5-10.

² Delitzsch.

"I have tried to tell of all Thy wondrous deeds but they are too numerous to relate."

The last phrase of verse 6 may be taken as a conditional: "Would I declare and speak of them, they pass all telling."¹

Briggs renders verse 6 as follows: "Many things hast Thou done, O Thou, Yahveh, my God. Thy wonders and Thy thoughts—there is no setting in order; should I tell, or should I speak, they are too numerous to be counted."

Verses 7-9.—"Great and manifold are the proofs of Thy loving-kindness. How am I to render thanks for it? *What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things that he hath rendered to me?*"² Bloody sacrifice and meal-offering Thou dost not desire, but Thou hast given me ears to hear Thy word and obey what is heard, for *obedience is better than sacrifices; and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams.*³ Burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou dost not require; then said I: Behold I am ready to do Thy will as it is prescribed for me in the book of the Law. I have desired (or, I delight) to do Thy will and Thy law finds a place in the depth of my heart as something most dear to me." The Vulgate connects "*that I should do Thy will*" with "*it is written of me.*" St. Paul also quotes it thus. The meaning is the same as that given above. "Behold I come, i.e., I am ready to do Thy bidding. In the book of the Law (*in the head of the book*)⁴ it is written concerning me (the king) that I should

¹ M'Swiney.

² Ps. cxv. 12.

³ 1 Kings xv. 22.

⁴ I.e., Head of roller on which parchment was wound. Hence by figure of speech the roll itself.

do Thy will and I have desired to do it; I take delight in it."

The passage may also be explained differently: "Burnt offerings and sin offering Thou didst not require, else I would have said: Behold I come to offer them," etc.

"*Ears Thou hast pierced for me*" is understood by some as a reference to the ceremony of piercing the ear in sign of lifelong bondage. (Cf. *Ex.* xxi. 6; *Deut.* xv. 17.) The Septuagint and Vulgate have "*ears Thou hast prepared for me.*" The Hebrew is to be taken in the same sense. "Ears hath He digged for me, i.e., formed the sense of hearing, bestowed the faculty of hearing, and given therewith the instruction to obey." ¹

"In *Heb.* x. 5-10, and in several old Latin Psalters and Fathers, we read, 'a body hast Thou prepared'—'body' may possibly have originated in *Heb.* x. 5, as it is required as the groundwork of the conclusion contained in verse 10, '*Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.*'" ²

The Psalmist has no intention of denying the divine origin and the salutary effect of sacrifice in the Mosaic dispensation. He simply wishes to emphasize the spiritual element that should accompany the material act and make a sacrifice of what would otherwise be but a waste and a carnage.

"This spiritual element appears evident for the first time in the sacrifice of Abraham, which God accepted, although materially incomplete. It was accepted because it had already brought out and expressed the full submission of Abraham to the divine will. The progress of sacrifice is traced throughout the whole of Jewish history by the increasing and intensifying

¹ Delitzsch.

² M'Swiney.

of the interior sentiment with a proportionate decrease of the external and material element. In the name of God the prophets cry out. '*Misericordiam volo et non sacrificium*'—'I wish mercy and not sacrifice'; and the Psalmist sings, 'Sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit: a contrite and humble heart Thou wilt not despise, O Lord.' The spiritual element reached a climax in the Sacrifice of the Cross."¹

Verses 10, 11.—"In thanksgiving for Thy benefits I have also proclaimed to the people assembled for worship (great church) Thy beneficence (justice) in delivering me from dangers. I will continue to praise Thee, O Lord, as Thou already knowest, I have not remained silent (hid in my heart) but openly declared Thy faithfulness and published abroad the deliverance Thou hast wrought for me. I have proclaimed Thy mercy and faithfulness before all the people (great council)."

Verses 12, 13.—"I have not withheld praise and thanksgiving; now on Thy part, O Lord, withhold not Thy mercies, for new dangers threaten me. Let Thy mercy and Thy faithfulness continually guard me, for evils without number have surrounded me. The consequences of my misdeeds have overtaken me, and so thickly do they press about me that I am unable to see; I am fairly dazed. They are multiplied above the very hairs of my head and I am driven almost to despair—my heart has forsaken me."

In the Vulgate verse 12b is in the past tense: "*Thy mercy and Thy truth have always upheld me,*" i.e., "withhold not Thy tender mercies, O Lord; assist me as in the past for Thy mercy and Thy truth have always protected me."

¹ Eucharistic Liturgy, p. 112.

Verses 14-16.—“Vouchsafe, O Lord, to deliver me from my afflictions. Graciously turn to me, O Lord, and help me. Let them that plot to take my life be put to shame and confusion because of the failure of their evil devices. Let them that wish me evil be put to rout and covered with shame. Let them that rejoice at my misfortunes be put to shame immediately as they deserve.” “‘*Heach*’ ‘’tis well’—is an exclamation of sarcastic delight which finds satisfaction in another’s misfortunes.”¹

Verse 17.—“Deliver those who turn to Thee in their necessities and seek Thy aid, that they may rejoice saying: The Lord be praised for His goodness and mercy.”

Verse 18.—“Though I am afflicted and troubled the Lord will care for me: Thou art my helper and my protector. O my God, tarry not.”

This verse may also be rendered: “Since I am afflicted and needy do Thou help me, O Lord. Thou art my helper and my deliverer. O my God, tarry not.”

¹Delitzsch.

PSALMUS XL

(HEB. XLI)

1 In finem, Psalmus ipsi David.

2 Beatus qui intelligit super egenum et pauperem:

in die mala liberabit eum Dominus.

3 Dominus conservet eum, et vivificet eum, et beatum faciat eum in terra:

et non tradat eum in animam inimicorum ejus.

4 Dominus opem ferat illi super lectum doloris ejus: universum stratum ejus versasti in infirmitate ejus.

5 Ego dixi: Domine, miserere mei:

sana animam meam, quia peccavi tibi.

6 Inimici mei dixerunt mala mihi:

Quando morietur, et peribit nomen ejus?

7 Et si ingrediebatur ut videret, vana loquebatur; cor ejus congregavit iniquitatem sibi.

Egrediebatur foras et loquebatur.

8 In idipsum adversum me susurrabant omnes inimici mei;

PSALM XL

(HEB. XLI)

1 Unto the end, a psalm for David himself.

2 Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the evil day.

3 The Lord preserve him and give him life, and make him blessed upon the earth:

and deliver him not up to the will of his enemies.

4 The Lord help him upon his bed of sorrow: thou hast turned all his couch in his sickness.

5 I said: O Lord, be thou merciful to me:

heal my soul for I have sinned against thee.

6 My enemies have spoken evils against me: when shall he die and his name perish?

7 And if he came in to see me, he spoke vain things: his heart gathered together iniquity to itself.

He went out and spoke to the same purpose.

8 All my enemies whispered together against me:

- adversum me cogitabant
mala mihi.
- 9 Verbum iniquum constituerunt adversum me:
Numquid qui dormit non
adjiciet ut resurgat?
- 10 Etenim homo pacis mee, in
quo speravi,
qui edebat panes meos, magnificavit super me supplantationem.
- 11 Tu autem, Domine, miserere mei, et resuscita me;

et retribuam eis.
- 12 In hoc cognovi quoniam voluisti me,

quoniam non gaudebit inimicus meus super me.
- 13 Me autem propter innocentiam suscepisti;
et confirmasti me in conspectu tuo in æternum.
- they devised evils to me.
- 9 They determined against me
an unjust word:
shall he that sleepeth rise
again no more?
- 10 For even the man of my
peace, in whom I trusted,
who ate my bread, hath
greatly supplanted me.
- 11 But thou, O Lord, have mercy on me, and raise me up again:
and I will requite them.
- 12 By this I know, that thou
hast had a good will for me:
because my enemy shall not
rejoice over me.
- 13 But thou hast upheld me
by reason of my innocence:
and hast established me in
thy sight for ever.

Doxology

- 14 Benedictus Dominus, Deus
Israel, a sæculo, et usque
in sæculum; fiat, fiat.¹

Doxology

- 14 Blessed be the Lord the
God of Israel from eternity
to eternity. So be
it. So be it.¹

PSALM XL

IN THIS psalm David "complains of a malevolent conspiracy, headed by one who had been his trusted friend and councillor. We naturally revert to Absalom's rebellion, and to the treason of Achitophel. This, however, is at best conjectural."²

Synopsis.—"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (2-4). The Psalmist acknowl-

¹ Hebrew, "Amen et amen."

² M'Swiney.

edges (5) that his sins have merited the afflictions described in verses 6-10. He prays for divine assistance (11-13). A doxology (14).

Verses 2-4.—It seems that advantage had been taken of David's illness to hatch a conspiracy against him in which even his trusted friend was involved. Before describing the wickedness and duplicity of the conspirators, the Psalmist takes occasion to ask the blessing of God on those who remained faithful and aided him during his sickness. He begins with a general statement very similar to the Fifth Beatitude. "Blessed is he who hath regard for the poor and the needy, because God will also have regard for him in the time of need"—"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."¹ The Psalmist then prays: "May the Lord protect him and give him a long and happy life in the Land. May He preserve him from the greed of his enemies." Then, as if recalling his own sufferings, the Psalmist prays: "May the Lord comfort him upon his bed of sickness; yea, rather may He soon change his bed of sickness into a couch of healthful repose."

Verses 3, 4 may also be construed in the future tense, corresponding to verse 2b: "*The Lord will preserve him and give him life,*" etc.

Verse 4b is unintelligible as it stands. Many explanations have been given, but none seems very satisfactory. The interpretation given above seems to be generally adopted, although it is only conjectural.

Verse 5.—The Psalmist acknowledges that his trials and afflictions are a just punishment for his sins, but he is sorry for them and prays for mercy and forgiveness.

¹ Matt. v. 7.

Verses 6, 7.—The Psalmist now describes the action of his enemies. "They wish for my death. They speak evil regarding me, for they say: When will he die," i.e., "may he soon die: may his very name perish." "If one of them comes to visit me he pretends great friendship (speaks vain things), but his purpose is only to spy upon me, and then going out he spreads about false reports to my detriment."

Verses 8, 9.—"The intelligence brought out by my hypocritical visitor is spread from mouth to mouth as pleasing news by all my enemies. They do this in secret; they only whisper it from ear to ear, for caution is still necessary. They go beyond what is told them and maliciously invent (determine against me an unjust word) false reports, saying that the end is near: that I can not possibly recover. Thus do they hope to strengthen their cause. They believe that many who now hesitate would openly join them if they thought my power was practically at an end."

In Hebrew verse 9 reads: "*An incurable malady is poured out upon him and when once he lieth down he will not rise up again.*"

Verse 10.—"Even my bosom friend, in whom I had the fullest confidence and whom I treated with the closest familiarity (who did eat my bread), even he has betrayed me."

This description agrees remarkably well with that of Achitophel, whose counsels David trusted almost as divine oracles.¹

The Septuagint reads, "*hath greatly supplanted me,*" i.e., "he tripped me up, overturned me by

¹ 2 Kings xvi. 23.

betraying me to my enemies." The Targum has, "He has magnified himself against me, with a view to underhand doings."

The Hebrew reads: "*Has lifted up his heel against me.*" It is thus quoted by Christ¹ as a prophecy of His betrayal by Judas. Verses 5 and 9 clearly show that this psalm is not Messianic in its literal sense. It is taken by Christ in a typical sense. This verse typifies very accurately the treason of Judas.

Verses 11-13.—"But Thou, O Lord, have mercy on me and raise me up from my bed of sickness that I may punish these conspirators as their wickedness deserves."

"What is meant is the requiting which it was David's duty as a duly constituted king to exercise, and which he did really execute by the power of God when he subdued the rebellion of Absalom."²

"I know that Thou dost look upon me with favor by the very fact that my enemies have no opportunity to rejoice at my death. Thou didst not allow that I should succumb to sickness and death; rather didst Thou uphold me, because of my innocence, for I was unjustly opposed and persecuted. Thou hast placed me under Thy protection (in Thy sight) forever."

Verse 14.—This is the closing doxology of the first book of Psalms and was most probably added by some collector of the Psalms, although some interpreters maintain that it is an integral part of the psalm.³

¹ John xiii. 18.

² Delitzsch.

³ Cf. Introduction, page 12.

PSALMI XLI, XLII

(HEB. XLII, XLIII)

- 1 In finem, intellectus filiis Core.
- 2 Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum: ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus.
- 3 Sitivit anima mea ad Deum fortem, vivum; quando veniam? et apparebo ante faciem Dei?
- 4 Fuerunt mihi lacrymæ meæ panes die ac nocte, cum dicitur mihi quotidie: Ubi est Deus tuus?
- 5 Hæc recordatus sum, et effudi in me animam meam, quoniam transibo in locum tabernaculi admirabilis, usque ad domum Dei,

in voce exultationis et confessionis, sonus epulantis.

Refrain

- 6 Quare tristis es, anima mea?
et quare conturbas me?
- Spera in Deo, quoniam adhuc confitebor illi,

PSALMS XLI, XLII

(HEB. XLII, XLIII)

- 1 Unto the end, understanding for the sons of Core.
- 2 As the hart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after thee, O God.
- 3 My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?
- 4 My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily: Where is thy God?
- 5 These things I remembered, and poured out my soul in me:
for I shall go over into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God:

With the voice of joy and praise; the noise of one feasting.

Refrain

- 6 Why art thou sad, O my soul?
and why dost thou trouble me?
- Hope in God, for I will still give praise to Him:

salutare vultus mei,¹ et
Deus meus.

the salvation of my coun-
tenance,² and my God.

7 Ad meipsum anima mea
conturbata est;
propterea memor ero tui de
terra Jordanis, et Her-
moniim a monte modico.

7 My soul is troubled within
myself:
therefore will I remember
thee from the land of Jor-
dan and Hermoniim, from
the little hill.

8 Abyssus abyssum invocat,
in voce cataractarum tua-
rum;
Omnia excelsa tua, et fluctus
tui super me transierunt.

8 Deep calleth on deep, at the
noise of thy flood-gates.

All thy heights and thy bil-
lows have passed over me.

9 In die mandavit Dominus
misericordiam suam,
et nocte canticum ejus; apud
me oratio Deo vitæ meæ.

9 In the daytime the Lord hath
commanded his mercy;
and a canticle to him in the
night. With me is prayer
to the God of my life.

10 Dicam Deo: Susceptor meus
es; quare oblitus es mei?

10 I will say to God: Thou art
my support. Why hast
thou forgotten me?

et quare contristatus incedo,
dum affligit me inimicus?

and why go I mourning,
whilst my enemy afflicteth
me?

11 Dum confringuntur ossa
mea, exprobraverunt mihi
qui tribulant me inimici
mei,
dum dicunt mihi per singu-
los dies: Ubi est Deus
tuus?

11 Whilst my bones are broken,
my enemies who trouble
me have reproached me;

whilst they say to me day
by day: Where is thy
God?

Refrain

12 Quare tristis es, anima
mea?
et quare conturbas me?

Spera in Deo, quoniam
adhuc confitebor illi,

Refrain

12 Why art thou cast down,
O my soul?
and why dost thou dis-
quiet me?

Hope thou in God, for I
will still give praise to
him:

¹ Verse 7 begins here in Vulgate.

² Verse 7 begins here in Douay.

salutare vultus mei, et
Deus meus.

the salvation of my coun-
tenance, and my God.

1 Judica me, Deus, et discerne
causam meam de gente non
sancta;
ab homine iniquo et doloso
erue me.

1 Judge me, O God, and dis-
tinguish my cause from
the nation that is not holy:
deliver me from the unjust
and deceitful man.

2 Quia tu es, Deus, fortitudo
mea, quare me repulisti?

2 For thou art God my
strength: why hast thou
cast me off?

et quare tristis incedo, dum
affligit me inimicus?

and why do I go sorrowful
whilst the enemy afflicteth
me?

3 Emitte lucem tuam et veri-
tatem tuam; ipsa me de-
duxerunt,
et adduxerunt in montem
sanctum tuum, et in ta-
bernacula tua.

3 Send forth thy light and thy
truth: they have con-
ducted me,
and brought me unto thy
holy hill, and into thy
tabernacles.

4 Et introibo ad altare Dei,

4 And I will go in to the altar
of God:

ad Deum, qui lætificat ju-
ventutem meam.

to God who giveth joy to my
youth.

5 Confitebor tibi in cithara,
Deus, Deus meus.

5 To thee, O God my God, I
will give praise upon the
harp:

Refrain

Quare tristis es, anima mea?

Refrain

Why art thou sad, O my
soul?

et quare conturbas me?

and why dost thou dis-
quiet me?

6 Spera in Deo, quoniam ad-
huc confitebor illi,
salutare vultus mei, et
Deus meus.

6 Hope in God, for I will still
give praise to him:
the salvation of my coun-
tenance, and my God.

PSALMS XLI, XLII

THE second book of the Psalter consists entirely of Elohistie psalms, i.e., psalms in which the divine name "*Elohim*" predominates. In the first book

the name "*Yahveh*" occurs 272 times and "*Elohim*" fifteen times. In the second book "*Elohim*" occurs 164 times while "*Yahveh*" is used only thirty times. This difference may be due to the collector of the Psalms, as is certainly the case with Psalm lii, which is simply a repetition of Psalm xiii with the name "*Yahveh*" changed to "*Elohim*."

The second book opens with eight psalms ascribed to "*the sons of Core*." These sons of Core were the descendants of the Core that was implicated with Dathan and Abiron in rebellion against Moses and Aaron.¹ His sons, however, were not involved in his punishment² and at the time of David their descendants formed one of the most renowned families of the Levites.

"In Jerusalem after the Exile Korahites³ were keepers of the temple gates,⁴ and the chronicler there informs us that even in David's time they were keepers of the threshold of the Tabernacle; and still earlier, in the time of Moses, in the camp of Yahveh, they were appointed as watchers of the entrance. They retained this ancient calling, to which allusion is made in *Ps.* lxxxiii. 11, in connection with the new arrangements instituted by David. The post of door-keeper in the Temple was assigned to two branches of the Korahite families, together with one Merarite.⁵ But they also even then served as musicians in the sanctuary. Heman, one of the three precentors, was a Korahite;⁶ his fourteen sons belonged . . . to the twenty-four heads of the twenty-four divisions of the musicians.⁷ The Korahites were also renowned even in the days of Jehosaphat as singers and musicians⁸ . . . In the period after the Exile there is no longer any mention of them in this character."⁹

¹ Num. xvi. 1.

² Descendants of Core (Korah).

³ 1 Paral. xxvi. 1-19.

⁴ 1 Paral. xxv.

⁵ Delitzsch.

⁶ Num. xxvi. 11.

⁷ 1 Paral. ix. 17 et seq.

⁸ 1 Paral. vi. 18-23.

⁹ 2 Paral. xx. 19.

Psalms xli-xlii originally formed one psalm, as is evident from the contents, structure, and diction. The title of Psalm xlii, "*to David*," found in the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate, is wanting in the Hebrew text.

Synopsis.—The Psalmist in exile longs to return to the house of the Lord (2, 3). The jeers of the ungodly and the remembrance of former times increase his sorrow (4, 5). A refrain expresses hope (6). Calamity and affliction overwhelm him (7, 8). The Psalmist arouses himself to new courage and resolves to have recourse to prayer (9-11). The refrain again expresses the Psalmist's confidence (12). He prays for deliverance (1, 2), and for return to Sion, to the house of God (3-5a).¹ Refrain (5b, 6).¹

Verses 2, 3.—It seems that the Psalmist is in exile among a heathen people who deride his hope in the God of Israel. He longs to return to the land of his fathers and to the house of God.

"As the thirsty hind longs for the streams of living waters, so does my soul long for Thee, O God. My soul doth thirst for God—the living God. How long, ere I return to the presence of my God in His holy temple!"

The *living God* is the source of life, the fountain flowing with the never-failing waters of grace to quench the soul's deep thirst, as the refreshing water of the streams stills the thirst of hinds.

In Hebrew verse 3a reads: "*My soul thirsts for Elohim, for the living El.*" The divine name "*El*" means strong, mighty; hence the Vulgate renders the verse, "*My soul thirsts after the strong, living God.*"

¹ According to the Douay numbering of verses.

St. Jerome renders verse 2: "As a small garden bed prepared for water courses, so is my soul prepared for Thee, O God."

Verses 4, 5.—"Sorrow overwhelms me; tears are my food day and night; my enemies who hold me captive continually taunt me saying: Where now is thy God! See, He hath abandoned thee; He is not able to save thee from our gods!"

"The memories of the past but multiply my sorrows, when I recall how I used to go up to the tabernacle—the house of God—singing His praises and rejoicing as one feasting."¹

The Psalmist recalls how he used to accompany the pilgrims going up to take part in the feasts and in the processions which characterized them.

The Hebrew reads: "*For I used to go with the throng; I went in procession with them to the house of God, with the voice of glad shouting and thanksgiving, a multitude keeping holiday.*"²

Verse 6.—The poet arouses himself to confidence and hope. "There are certainly reasons sufficient for sorrow and dejection of soul; there are still greater reasons for hope of the future. Though apparently absent, God has not abandoned me. The time will surely come when I will appear before Him again in the Temple and sing His praises for my deliverance. He is my God and my deliverer."

Verses 7, 8.—Despite all his efforts, the Psalmist feels himself abandoned; his soul is distressed and he continually thinks of God from whom he is separated. In exile beyond the Jordan in the

¹ M'Swiney.

² This is probably a reference to the sacrificial banquet. Cf. Deut. xxi. 11 et seq.

vicinity of Hermon and Mizar,¹ he turns longing eyes toward Jerusalem and the sanctuary of his God. The roaring of the mountain torrents seems to find an echo in the tumult of his soul. He feels as if their waters, like waves of misfortune, were breaking above his head. These dashing, sporting waves of God come rushing down the mountain side and seem to call aloud to one another as they leap from precipice to precipice. In all this grandeur of nature the poet sees nought but the mirrored image of his many afflictions threatening to involve him in utter destruction.

Verses 9-11.—The Psalmist now takes courage again, in the hope that after the night of affliction a day of deliverance will dawn. When that day shall have accomplished its work of deliverance there will follow the night of thanksgiving with hymns of praise and prayer to the God of his life, i.e., the author and preserver of his life; the One who delivers him from the danger of death. He now prays that this day of deliverance may dawn. "I say to my God: Thou art my helper (Heb. *"rock"*). Why dost thou forget me? Why must I go mourning beneath the oppression of the enemy? While I am helpless and reduced to dire extremity as if my very bones were crushed, my enemies keep taunting me. They keep saying to me in derision: Where is thy God? Let Him deliver thee now if He can."

Verse 12.—The refrain repeated here expresses

¹ Mizar signifies "*littleness*," hence Septuagint and Vulgate render it "*little hill*." It is probably the name of some hill or small mountain peak. Knabenbauer takes "*land of the Jordan and Hermoniim*" to mean Chanaan, the Land of Promise, and then interprets thus: "*Far from the land of the Jordan*," etc.

the Psalmist's confidence that his prayer will be answered.

Verses 1, 2.—He now continues: "Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation; deliver me from the unjust and deceitful ones, for Thou, O God, art my strength. Why hast thou cast me off and refused Thy aid? Why must I go about mourning beneath the oppression of the enemy?"

"Unjust and deceitful man" may be a singular with a collective meaning, or it may be intended to single out some particular enemy.

Verses 3-5a.—"Manifest Thy mercy and fidelity. May they lead me and bring me again to Sion, Thy holy mountain, and to Thy tabernacle. Then will I go in to the altar of God—the God who gives me joy and gladness like unto the joys of youth.¹ To Thee, O my God, will I give praise upon the harp."

Verses 5b, 6.—"Why, then, art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me? Hope in God, for the day will surely come when I shall return to the holy mountain, to the tabernacle, to sing the praises of my deliverer, my God."

¹ *Youth* is not found in the Hebrew text and there is nothing to indicate that the author was yet in his youth, so we must take it figuratively as above,

PSALMUS XLIII
(HEB. XLIV)

- 1 In finem, filiis Core, ad intellectum.
- 2 Deus, auribus nostris audivimus,
patres nostri annuntiaverunt nobis:
opus quod operatus es in diebus eorum,
et in diebus antiquis:
- 3 Manus tua gentes disperdidit, et plantasti eos;

affixisti populos et expulisti eos.
- 4 Nec enim in gladio suo possederunt terram,

et brachium eorum non salvavit eos;
Sed dextera tua et brachium tuum,
et illuminatio vultus tui,
quoniam complacuisti in eis.
- 5 Tu es ipse rex meus et Deus meus;
qui mandas salutes Jacob.
- 6 In te inimicos nostros ventilabimus cornu,

et in nomine tuo spernemus insurgentes in nobis.

PSALM XLIII
(HEB. XLIV)

- 1 Unto the end, for the sons of Core, to *give* understanding.
- 2 We have heard, O God, with our ears:
our fathers have declared to us,
the work thou hast wrought in their days,
and in the days of old.
- 3 Thy hand destroyed the Gentiles, and thou plantedst them:
thou didst afflict the people and cast them out.
- 4 For they got not the possession of the land by their own sword:
neither did their own arm save them.
But thy right hand and thy arm,
and the light of thy countenance: because thou wast pleased with them.
- 5 Thou art thyself my king and my God,
who commandest the saving of Jacob.
- 6 Through thee we will push down our enemies with the horn:
and through thy name we will despise them that rise up against us.

- 7 Non enim in arcu meo sperabo,
et gladius meus non salva-
bit me;
8 Salvasti enim nos de affli-
gentibus nos,
et odientes nos confudisti.
- 9 In Deo laudabimur tota die;
et in nomine tuo confitebi-
mur in sæculum. Selah.
- 10 Nunc autem repulisti et
confudisti nos;
et non egredieris, Deus, in
virtutibus nostris.
- 11 Avertisti nos retrorsum post
inimicos nostros;
et qui oderunt nos diripie-
bant sibi.
- 12 Dedisti nos tamquam oves
escarum;
et in gentibus dispersisti nos.
- 13 Vendidisti populum tuum
sine pretio;
et non fuit multitudo in
commutationibus eorum.
- 14 Posuisti nos opprobrium
vicinis nostris,
subsannationem et derisum
his qui sunt in circuitu
nostro.
- 15 Posuisti nos in similitudinem
gentibus;
commotionem capitis in
populis.
- 16 Tota die verecundia mea
contra me est,
et confusio faciei meæ co-
operuit me:
- 17 a voce exprobrantis et oblo-
quentis,
- 7 For I will not trust in my
bow:
neither shall my sword save
me.
- 8 But thou hast saved us
from them that afflict us:
and hast put them to shame
that hate us.
- 9 In God shall we glory all
the day long:
and in thy name we will
give praise for ever. Selah.
- 10 But now thou hast cast us
off, and put us to shame:
and thou, O God, wilt not
go out with our armies.
- 11 Thou hast made us turn
our back to our enemies:
and they that hated us
plundered for themselves.
- 12 Thou hast given us up like
sheep to be eaten:
thou hast scattered us
among the nations.
- 13 Thou hast sold thy people
for no price:
and there was no reckoning
in the exchange of them.
- 14 Thou hast made us a re-
proach to our neighbors,
a scoff and derision to them
that are round about us.
- 15 Thou hast made us a by-
word among the Gentiles:
a shaking of the head among
the people.
- 16 All the day long my shame
is before me:
and the confusion of my
face hath covered me.
- 17 At the voice of him that
reproacheth and detract-
eth me:

- a facie inimici et persequen-
tis.
at the face of the enemy
and persecutor.
- 18 Hæc omnia venerunt super
nos; nec obliti sumus te,
et inique non egimus in
testamento tuo.
18 All these things have come
upon us, yet we have not
forgotten thee:
and we have not done
wickedly in thy covenant.
- 19 Et non recessit retro cor
nostrum;
et declinasti semitas nos-
tras a via tua;
19 And our heart hath not
turned back:
neither hast thou turned
aside our steps from thy
way.
- 20 Quoniam humiliasti nos in
loco afflictionis,
et cōperuit nos umbra
mortis.
20 For thou hast humbled us
in the place of affliction:
and the shadow of death
hath covered us.
- 21 Si obliti sumus nomen Dei
nostri,
et si expandimus manus
nostras ad Deum alienum,
21 If we have forgotten the
name of our God,
and if we have spread forth
our hands to a strange god:
22 Shall not God search out
these things:
for he knoweth the secrets
of the heart.
Because for thy sake we
are killed all the day long:
we are counted as sheep for
the slaughter.
- 22 nonne Deus requirit ista?
ipse enim novit abscondita
cordis.
Quoniam propter te morti-
ficamur tota die;
æstimati sumus sicut oves
occisionis.
22 Arise, why sleepest thou,
O Lord?
arise, and cast us not off to
the end.
- 23 Exurge; quare obdormis,
Domine?
exurge, et ne repellas in
finem.
23 Why turnest thou thy face
away?
and forgettest our want and
our trouble?
- 24 Quare faciem tuam avertis?
oblivisceris inopiæ nostræ
et tribulationis nostræ?
24 For our soul is humbled
down to the dust:
our belly cleaveth to the
earth.
- 25 Quoniam humiliata est in
pulvere anima nostra;
conglutinator est in terra
venter noster.
25 Arise, O Lord, help us
and redeem us for thy
name's sake.
- 26 Exurge, Domine, adjuva nos,
et redime nos propter nomen
tuum.

PSALM XLIII

PATRIZI and many non-Catholic interpreters assign this psalm to the time of the Machabees. Verses 13, 18–20, 23 are especially well suited to the state of affairs at that time. Other scholars refer it to the Babylonian Captivity. Following De Lagarde and Cornely, Knabenbauer considers it almost certain that this psalm describes conditions under Ezechias at the time of Sennacharib's invasion, 701 B.C. (Cf. 4 *Kings* xviii, xix; *Isaias* xxxvi, xxxvii).

Synopsis.—God wonderfully favored the fathers in times past (2–4). He alone can deliver His people from their afflictions (5–9), but He permits them to be grievously oppressed (10–17). Nevertheless, they are faithful to Him (18–22) and call upon Him for deliverance (23–26).

Verses 2–4.—“We have heard from our fathers the wonderful things Thou didst for them in days of old. We have heard how Thou didst uproot Gentile nations¹ and didst plant (settle) our fathers in their stead. We have heard how Thou didst afflict the Gentile peoples and drive them forth from the land of Chanaan. Not by their own strength did our fathers acquire the land. It was Thy power and Thy loving-kindness (the light of Thy countenance) that wrought in their behalf, because Thou didst love them.”

The parallelism of verse 3 requires that the phrase “*cast them out*” (Heb. “*spread them abroad*”) be referred to the Israelites instead of the Gentiles as in the Vulgate. The meaning then becomes: “Thy

¹ Chanaanites, Hethites, Hevites, etc., Cf. Josue iii. 10.

hand did uproot Gentile nations, and did plant our fathers in their stead; Thou didst destroy Gentile peoples, and didst cause our fathers to spread abroad like a flourishing tree."

Verses 5-9.—"Thou art also *my* King and *my* God—Thou who ever giveth the victories to Israel (Jacob). As Thou didst battle for our fathers in days gone by, so wilt Thou do for us now. By Thee shall we charge our enemies, like an angry bull rushing¹ them with his horns and trampling them under foot."

"I trust not in my own strength (bow and sword), for it is Thou who hast ever delivered us and put our oppressors to shame."

"It is not Israel's own might that gives them the supremacy, but God's gracious might in Israel's weakness. God is therefore Israel's glory or pride."²

"In God do we boast (glory) continually and to Thy name will we ever give thanks." "The psalm here soars aloft to the more joyous height of praise, from which it falls abruptly into bitter complaint."²

Verses 10-13.—"Thou alone, O God, canst protect us, yet Thou dost abandon us. Thou hast left us to ourselves; Thou wentest not forth with our armies,³ but didst allow the enemy to smite and plunder us to their heart's content. We are given over like sheep to be devoured; we are scattered amongst Gentiles—sold as slaves for a mere nothing."

¹ Vulgate: "tossing them in the air with his horns."

² Delitzsch.

³ Cf. Ps. lix. 12. "The armies of Israel going forth without their God as the supreme commander, went to certain defeat and dishonor" (Briggs).

In verse 13 "*pretii*," or "*pecuniae*" must be understood after "*multitudo*."

Verses 14-17.—"By permitting our defeat Thou hast brought upon us the contempt and derision of our neighbors (Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, etc.), and made our name a byword among the nations. They point to us as an example and at the mention of our name they wag their head in derision and contempt. I am ashamed and confused by the jeering words and scornful mien of our victorious enemies."

Verses 18-20.—These misfortunes can not be looked upon as a punishment for sins, because there is no idolatry in the land and the Covenant is faithfully observed. There are no great national sins calling for such severe chastisement.

"All these misfortunes have come upon us although we have not forgotten Thee. We have faithfully kept Thy Covenant. Our heart hath not turned from Thee nor our steps from Thy ways that Thou shouldst humble us with sore affliction and overshadow us with deepest gloom (shadow of death)."

In Hebrew verse 19 reads: "*Our heart is not turned back; nor has our step declined from Thy path*," or as Delitzsch renders it: "*Our heart has not turned back, that our step should have declined from Thy path*." The Vulgate reads: "*Neither hast Thou turned aside our steps*," etc., i.e., "Thou hast not permitted our steps to turn aside; Thou hast given us the grace to follow in the path of justice."

In verse 20 the Hebrew reads, "*Thou hast crushed us in the place of jackals*," i.e., in a desolate place

frequented only by jackals. "*Place of affliction*" and "*shadow of death*" are figures of Israel's affliction and deep distress. They may also refer to a place of defeat in some desolate wilderness, in a dark, gloomy wady.

Verses 21, 22.—"If we have neglected the worship of our God and turned to idols does not God, who knows the secrets of the heart, justly seek out these things to punish them?" In other words: "Had we forsaken the worship of God and turned to idols we would be suffering the just punishment of our crimes. Such, however, is not the case. On the contrary we are suffering precisely because of our fidelity to God and His Covenant. For Thy sake we suffer daily and are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."¹

Verses 23-26.—"We suffer for our fidelity to Thee, O Lord; arise, therefore, and deliver us for Thy name's sake. Why art Thou inattentive to our needs as though asleep? Thou hast seemingly cast us off now a long time. Let it not be for ever. Why dost Thou turn from us and seem to forget our afflictions? We are humbled; yea prostrated in the very dust.² Arise, O Lord, and help us. Deliver us for Thy name's sake."

¹ St. Paul applies this verse to the sufferings of the Christians for their faith. Rom. viii. 36.

² Cf. the phrase "to bite the dust."

PSALMUS XLIV

(HEB. XLV)

1 In finem, pro iis qui commutabuntur, filiis Core, ad intellectum, canticum pro dilecto.

2 Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum;
dico ego opera mea regi.

Lingua mea calamus scribæ
velociter scribentis.

3 Speciosus forma præ filiis hominum,
diffusa est gratia in labiis tuis;
Propterea benedixit te Deus in æternum.

4 Accingere ¹ gladio tuo super femur tuum, potentissime.

5 Specie tua et pulchritudine tua
intende, prospere procede, et regna,
propter veritatem, et mansuetudinem, et justitiam;
et deducet te mirabiliter dextera tua.

6 Sagittæ tuæ acutæ, populi sub te cadent,
in corda inimicorum regis.

PSALM XLIV

(HEB. XLV)

1 Unto the end, for them that shall be changed, for the sons of Core, for understanding. A canticle for the Beloved.

2 My heart hath uttered a good word:
I speak my works to the king:
My tongue is the pen of a scrivener that writeth swiftly.

3 Thou art beautiful above the sons of men:
grace is poured abroad in thy lips;
therefore hath God blessed thee forever.

4 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most mighty.

5 With thy comeliness and thy beauty
set out, proceed prosperously, and reign.
Because of truth and meekness and justice:
and thy right hand shall conduct thee wonderfully.

6 Thy arrows are sharp:
under thee shall people fall, into the hearts of the king's enemies.

¹ Should read *accinge*.

- 7 Sedes tua, Deus, in sæculum
sæculi;
virga directionis virga regni
tui.
- 8 Dilexisti justitiam, et odisti
iniquitatem;
Propterea unxit te Deus,
Deus tuus, oleo lætitiæ,
præ consortibus tuis.
- 9 Myrrha, et gutta, et casia
a vestimentis tuis,
a domibus eburneis; ex
quibus delectaverunt te
10 filiæ regum in honore tuo.
- Astitit regina a dextris tuis
in vestitu deaurato, cir-
cumdata varietate.
- 11 Audi, filia, et vide, et inclina
aurem tuam:
et obliviscere populum tuum,
et domum patris tui.
- 12 Et concupiscet rex decorem
tuum,
quoniam ipse est Dominus
Deus tuus, et adorabunt
eum.
- 13 Et filiæ Tyri in muneribus
vultum tuum deprecabun-
tur; omnes divites plebis.
- 14 Omnis gloria ejus filiæ regis
ab intus,
15 in fimbriis aureis ¹ circum-
amicta varietatibus.
- 7 Thy throne, O God, is for
ever and ever:
the sceptre of thy kingdom
is a sceptre of upright-
ness.
- 8 Thou hast loved justice,
and hated iniquity:
therefore God, thy God,
hath anointed thee with
the oil of gladness above
thy fellows.
- 9 Myrrh and stacte and cassia
perfume thy garments,
from the ivory houses: out
of which
10 the daughters of kings have
delighted thee in thy
glory.
- The queen stood on thy
right hand,
in gilded clothing; sur-
rounded with variety.
- 11 Hearken, O daughter, and
see, and incline thy ear:
and forget thy people and
thy father's house.
- 12 And the king shall greatly
desire thy beauty;
for he is the Lord thy God,
and him they shall adore.
- 13 And the daughters of Tyre
with gifts,
yea, all the rich among the
people, shall entreat thy
countenance.
- 14 All the glory of the king's
daughter is within
15 in golden borders, ² clothed
round about with vari-
eties.

¹ Verse 15 begins here in the Vulgate.² Verse 15 begins here in Douay.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Adducentur regi virgines
post eam,
proximæ ejus afferentur tibi.</p> <p>16 Afferentur in lætitia et ex-
ultatione;
adducentur in templum re-
gis.</p> <p>17 Pro patribus tuis nati sunt
tibi filii,
constitues eos principes su-
per omnem terram.</p> <p>18 Memores erunt nominis tui
in omni generatione et
generationem.</p> <p>Propterea populi confite-
buntur tibi in æternum,
et in sæculum sæculi.</p> | <p>After her shall virgins be
brought to the king:
her neighbors shall be
brought to thee.</p> <p>16 They shall be brought with
gladness and rejoicing:
they shall be brought into
the temple of the king.</p> <p>17 Instead of thy fathers, sons
are born to thee:
thou shalt make them
princes over all the earth.</p> <p>18 They shall remember thy
name throughout all gen-
erations.</p> <p>Therefore shall people praise
thee for ever; yea, for
ever and ever.</p> |
|---|---|

PSALM XLIV

THE words of St. Paul (*Heb.* i. 8, 9) clearly indicate the Messianic character of this psalm. "It may be viewed as an epitome of the Canticle of Canticles, and most probably in its direct and literal sense, or at least in its typico-mystic import, is unquestionably a bridal song wherein the 'Spirit that spake by the prophets' hymns the nuptials of Incarnate Wisdom with regenerate humanity in the unity of His Holy and Catholic Church."¹ The Fathers of the Church and Rabbinical authorities are almost at one in referring this psalm to the Son of David. The Targum renders verse 3: "Thy beauty, O King Messias, is greater than that of the children of men."

Many Catholic authors consider this psalm directly and literally Messianic, because it contains

¹ M'Swiney.

passages that can be applied in their full sense to Christ alone. They maintain that the union of Christ with His Church is allegorically represented as the marriage of a king with a royal bride. There are some, however, who maintain that in its literal sense the psalm is historical; that it celebrates some royal wedding which typifies the union of Christ with His Church. In this sense Bossuet calls it a historico-prophetical psalm. Even in this case the psalm remains truly Messianic, because this typical sense was intended by the Holy Ghost, and it was precisely because of this typical reference to Christ that the psalm found a place in Sacred Scripture.

Those who defend the historical character of the psalm do not agree in assigning its occasion. It is usually referred to Solomon's wedding with Pharaoh's daughter,¹ but the absence of any mention of Egypt seems fatal to this opinion. Moreover, Solomon was known as a prince of peace, whereas the king celebrated in this psalm is described as a great warrior. The opinion of Delitzsch seems more probable. He conjectures that the psalm celebrates the marriage of Joram son of Josaphat with Athalia daughter of Achab, king of Israel.² Accepting this conjecture, the mention of Tyre and the palace of ivory is very natural. Athalia was descended from the royal house of Tyre,³ and among the memorable works of Achab is mentioned the building of a house of ivory.⁴ Delitzsch says:

"Why should not even Joram, at a crisis of his life so rich in hope, have been a type of the Messias? His name is found in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, *Matt.* 1. 8. Joram and Atha-

¹ 3 Kings iii. 1.

² 2 Paral. xxi. 6.

³ 3 Kings xvi. 31.

⁴ 3 Kings xxii. 39.

lia are among the ancestors of Our Lord. This significance in relation to the history of the redemption is still left them, although they have not realized the good wishes expressed by the poet at the time of their marriage, just as in fact Solomon also began in the spirit and ended in the flesh."

Synopsis.—(Literally Messianic.) The psalm is divided into two parts (3-10 and 11-16) with an introduction (2) and a conclusion (17, 18).

PART I.—Under the figure of a royal bridegroom the Messiah is praised for His comeliness (3), and His power that will overcome all enemies (4-6). He is praised on account of His divinity, the eternal duration and justice of His reign (7, 8), His external splendor (9), and, finally, on account of His spouse, the Church (10).

PART II.—The Church is exhorted to abandon all things for the love of Christ (11). In return she shall be loved by Him (12) and His honor and glory shall redound to her (13). The spiritual beauty and glory of the Church is described (14, 15a), as well as her happy lot (15b, 16). From this union of Christ and the Church will spring forth heirs—the apostles and their successors—to rule the world (17). They will ever praise and glorify the name of the Messiah (18). These last verses foretell the universality and perpetuity of the Church.

If we adopt this interpretation we must bear in mind that the psalm is an allegory, and, like all allegories, it is developed poetically. Many things are added simply to give the story a lifelike touch. We should endeavor to find the points of comparison and not urge the other parts too closely. We need not try to apply every detail of the allegory, lest we be driven to forced and fanciful interpretations.

Synopsis.—(Historical Sense). Introduction (2).

PART I.—The Psalmist praises the king's beauty (3), valor (4-6), and justice (7, 8). He is dressed as a bridegroom and his spouse stands beside him in golden array (9, 10).

PART II.—The queen is admonished to forget her own people for the sake of her new lord, on whose account she will be greatly honored (11-13). The queen's beauty is described (14-16). Heirs will be born to the king to perpetuate his throne and make his name memorable to future generations (17, 18).

Verse 1.—In Hebrew the title reads: "*For the chief musician, upon lilies, to the sons of Core; a maschil, a song of loves.*"

"*Upon lilies*" is generally taken as a reference to some well-known melody beginning with the word "*lilies*" or, perhaps, "*lilies are the testimony.*" (Cf. *Ps. lix.*) The Septuagint vocalizes the word differently, deriving it from "*shanah*"—"to change." "*A song of loves*" indicates that the psalm is a bridal song, an epithalamium.

Verse 2.—"From the abundance of my heart there wells up a goodly song. I sing the praises of a king (or, I address my words to a king) and the grandeur of the subject makes me eloquent. Thoughts come so rapidly that my tongue must move quickly like the pen of a practised writer."

Verse 3.—The Psalmist now addresses the king: "Thou art most fair in form and stature, and the grace of speech is added to the beauty of face and form." "Over his lips is poured forth gracefulness or benevolence, inasmuch as, even without speaking, the form of his lips and each of their movements

awaken love and trust; it is evident, however, that from such lips, full of grace, there must proceed also words of grace."¹ "*And they wondered at the words of grace that proceeded from his mouth. Never did man speak like this man.*" (Cf. Luke iv. 22; John vii. 46.)

In this comeliness of form and grace of speech the Psalmist sees a manifestation of God's blessing. These outward appearances are not the cause, but the result, of divine blessing.

Verses 4-6.—With beauty and gracefulness is joined strength and valor. The king is a hero, and the Psalmist calls on him to go forth and battle for truth and justice. "Gird on thy sword, O powerful warrior; go forth with thy royal majesty and God-like glory; press on to victory and prove thyself a king. Battle in behalf of truth, meekness, and justice. Thy right hand shall teach thee (or, let thy right hand teach thee) terrible deeds, i.e., deeds of strength and valor. Thy power shall be irresistible. Thy arrows are sharp; they shall pierce the hearts of thy enemies. Nations shall fall beneath thy feet."

In Hebrew "*thy comeliness and thy beauty*" belongs to verse 4, and reads:

*"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O mighty one;
Gird on thy brightness and thy majesty."*

The Hebrew words here used for brightness and majesty usually refer to the glory and majesty of God. When applied to Christ they can be taken in their full sense. If applied to an earthly king they probably refer to the glory of the Davidic kingship

¹ Delitzsch.

which was a reflection of the divine glory. (Cf. Ps. xx. 6.) They may also refer to military pomp and splendor.

In the Septuagint verse 5 reads: "*Tread the bow, proceed victoriously,*" etc. In verse 6 the phrase, "*under thee shall people fall,*" has been interjected between the other two members as if by poetic ardor or the impetus of ideas.

When applied to Christ these verses show His irresistible power and His victory over all nations by converting them to the faith. (Cf. Ps. ii. 9.)

Verses 7, 8.—"The king will triumph over all his enemies and establish his power so firmly that his throne will descend to a long line of heirs. He will rule with justice, because he himself is just . . he loves justice and hates all evil. Therefore, God has blessed him (or, will bless him) with happiness and prosperity."

It is difficult to interpret these verses historically. We must take the words in a limited sense. The eternal duration of the king's throne and his supreme justice may be interpreted in an imperfect sense in relation to some earthly king who was a type of Christ, in whom these words find their full import. It is more difficult to explain the use of "*Elohim*" (God) in the phrase "*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*" It might be taken in an improper sense as in Ex. xxi. 6, where it means earthly rulers. Against this interpretation is the fact that everywhere else in the Coritic psalms "*Elohim*" is equivalent to "*Yahveh.*" Moreover, St. Paul quotes these words to prove the divinity of Christ. Perhaps it is best to explain it by assuming that the Psalmist looks beyond the king of whom he speaks and ad-

dresses Him whom the king typifies. (Cf. Introduction, p. 17.)

Verses 9, 10.—The king, praised as a comely hero and a just ruler, is now described as a bridegroom adorned for his nuptials. His garments, fragrant with precious ointments, are brought to him from ivory palaces. In these palaces even kings' daughters are among his concubines to gladden his heart. The queen stands at his right hand in ornaments of gold, and with clothing of divers colors (or, with clothing of embroidery).

"*Surrounded with variety*" is wanting here in Hebrew. It may have been interpolated from verse 15.

As generally translated, the Hebrew reads:

9. "*Myrrh and aloes, cassia are all thy garments;
Out of ivory palaces doth the music of stringed instruments make thee glad.*"
10. "*Kings' daughters are among thy beloved ones,
The queen hath set herself at thy right hand
In ornaments of gold of Ophir.*"

According to this reading the ivory palaces are those of the queen's father. When going to bring away his bride the bridegroom is greeted by strains of festive music from out these ivory palaces.

Briggs renders the whole passage differently. He ends the previous strophe with the words: "*Therefore Yahveh thy God hath anointed thee,*" i.e., made thee king. He then renders verses 9, 10 as follows:

- "*O oil of joy above thy fellows,
Myrrh and aloes, cassia (thou).
All thy garments are from ivory palaces,*"

*Whence kings' daughters gladden thee.
In thy costly things ¹ the queen doth stand at thy right hand
In golden attire, her clothing of embroidery."*

Verses 11-13.—The poet now addresses the queen. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider. Give ear to my words." He then admonishes her to give up her own people, even her father's house, that she may be entirely devoted to her new master. The king will then be greatly pleased with her. He justly claims her reverence because he is her lord; he is worthy of her love and devotion because he is a king whom the people honor and respect. Her devotion to him will redound to her own honor and glory. Even the people of Tyre and other rich nations will seek her favor with presents.

If this psalm celebrates the marriage of Joram and Athalia, as Delitzsch thinks, the mention of Tyre is very easily explained. If not, it is probably given as an example of rich and powerful nations.

"God" is wanting in the Hebrew and Greek texts of verse 12. In some codices "and" is also omitted at the beginning of verse 13, making it read:

"*Him shall the daughters of Tyre adore with gifts.*"

The Hebrew reads:

*"Hearken, daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear;
And forget thy people, and thy father's house;
And the king shall delight in thy beauty:
For he is thy lord, and bow down to him.
And the daughter of Tyre with a gift:
Yea, the richest of the nation shall entreat thy favor."* ²

¹ That is, precious stones and jewels given her by the king.

² M'Swinye's translation.

Verses 14-16.—The meaning of these verses is brought out more clearly in the Hebrew:

*" All glory is the king's daughter in the inner chamber;
of gold-woven texture is her clothing.
In variegated embroidered garments is she escorted to the
king;
Virgins, her companions, following her
Are brought unto thee.
They are escorted with joy and exultation,
They enter into the king's palace."*

The Psalmist describes the departure of the bride from her father's house and her entry into the palace of her royal spouse. First of all he describes her as she appears in her own chamber where she is seen in dazzling splendor. There she appears to best advantage because she is not obliged to veil herself as oriental women are accustomed to do when in public. Her beauty is heightened by the splendor of her clothing, which is inwrought with gold and embroidered. She is conducted to her spouse, the king, with a retinue of virgins. The procession moves on with gladness and rejoicings until it finally enters the palace of the king where the bride takes her place beside him as mentioned in verse 10. Tiefertal interprets "*the king's daughter*" as a figure of the synagogue, which became queen (the Church) by its union with Christ. The virgins following in the procession would then represent the Gentile nations that afterward entered the Church.

Verse 17.—The Psalmist expresses a "wish that the king may have a numerous posterity and that he may become a universal king with his sons reigning as princes in all the earth."¹ The mention of sons

¹ Briggs.

to take the place of fathers would be appropriately addressed to the queen after the admonition to forget her own people and her father's house, but the pronouns being masculine in Hebrew clearly show that the words are addressed to the king.

Verse 18.—This verse declares (or expresses a wish) that the king's name shall be handed down from generation to generation as a glorious remembrance. The Hebrew reads: "*I will make thy name memorable,*" i.e., "by means of this my song in thy honor."

In the Messianic sense these verses are usually applied to the apostles and their successors in the Church, who are set to rule in all the earth. By their preaching they keep alive the name of the King so effectively that all peoples shall praise Him forever.

This psalm may be applied to the union of God with humanity in the Incarnation, and the union of Christ with individual souls by means of sanctifying grace.

PSALMUS XLV

(HEB. XLVI)

1 In finem, filiis Core, pro
arcanis, Psalmus.

2 Deus noster refugium et
virtus;
adjutor in tribulationibus
quæ invenerunt nos nimis.

3 Propterea non timebimus
dum turbabitur terra,

et transferentur montes in
cor maris.

4 Sonuerunt, et turbatæ sunt
aquæ eorum;
conturbati sunt montes in
fortitudine ejus. Selah.

5 Fluminis impetus lætificat
civitatem Dei:

sanctificavit tabernaculum
suum Altissimus.

6 Deus in medio ejus, non
commovebitur;
adjuvabit eam Deus mane
diluculo.

7 Conturbatæ sunt gentes, et
inclinata sunt regna:

dedit vocem suam, mota est
terra.

Refrain

8 Dominus virtutum nobis-
cum;

PSALM XLV

(HEB. XLVI)

1 Unto the end, for the sons
of Core, for the hidden.

2 Our God is our refuge and
strength:

a helper in troubles, which
have found us exceedingly.

3 Therefore we will not fear,
when the earth shall be
troubled;

and the mountains shall be
removed into the heart of
the sea.

4 Their waters roared and
were troubled;

the mountains were troubled
with his strength. Selah.

5 The stream of the river
maketh the city of God
joyful:

the most High hath sancti-
fied his own tabernacle.

6 God is in the midst thereof,
it shall not be moved:

God will help it in the morn-
ing early.

7 Nations were troubled, and
kingdoms were bowed
down:

he uttered his voice, the
earth trembled.

Refrain

8 The Lord of armies is with
us:

susceptor noster Deus Jacob.
Selah.

the God of Jacob is our
protector. Selah.

9 Venite, et videte opera Domini,
quæ posuit prodigia super
terram,
10 auferens bella usque ad
finem terræ.
Arcum conteret et confringet
arma:
et scuta comburet igni.

9 Come and behold ye the
works of the Lord:
what wonders he hath done
upon earth,
10 making wars to cease even
to the ends of the earth.
He shall destroy the bow,
and break the weapons:
and the shield he shall burn
in the fire.

11 Vacate, et videte quoniam
ego sum Deus:
exaltabor in gentibus, et
exaltabor in terra.

11 Be still and see that I am
God;
I will be exalted among the
nations, and I will be
exalted in the earth.

Refrain

Refrain

12 Dominus virtutum nobis-
cum:
susceptor noster Deus Jacob.
Selah.

12 The Lord of armies is with
us:
the God of Jacob is our
protector. Selah.

PSALM XLV

PSALMS xlv, xlvi, and xlvii are in thanksgiving for deliverance from some great danger threatening God's people. Their similarities have induced many interpreters to regard these psalms as celebrating one and the same historical event. Some find an occasion for them in the miraculous destruction of Sennacherib's army. (Cf. 4 *Kings* xix.) Others see in them a reference to the destruction of the allied armies of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Syrians that threatened the kingdom of Juda in the time of Josaphat. (Cf. 2 *Paral.* xx.)

Psalm xlv is composed of three strophes and

a refrain that occurs after the second and third strophes and probably should be placed after the first also. This refrain gives us the keynote of the psalm: "God is with us, we have nothing to fear."

Synopsis.—"God is our protector; we fear not even though the world be broken up (2-4). The holy city is secure from all harm because God Himself protects it (5-7). He has destroyed its enemies and put an end to the war (9-11)."

Verse 1.—See remarks on title of Psalm xi.

Verses 2-4.—"God is our refuge and strength; He is our help in the distresses that have come upon us in abundance." The Hebrew reads: "*God is to us a refuge and strength: A help in afflictions is He constantly found. Therefore we fear not though even greater distress should break upon us. Even should the earth be broken up and the mountains topple into the sea, yet we will not fear. Let the waters surge and roar; let them shake the very mountains in their rage, yet no fear shall come over us, for the Lord of armies is with us: the God of Jacob is our protector.*"

The Psalmist supposes the most extreme case—the falling in of the universe; the return of all things to original chaos. Some see in these verses a picture of the desolation wrought by the invading army. The work of destruction is represented as an earthquake toppling mountains into the sea and causing great roaring and surging of waves that shake the very mountains.

Verses 5-7.—All outside may be confusion and uproar but the city is safely at peace, for a stream of grace or loving-kindness gladdens it as the river

that issued from Eden watered the Garden of Paradise.¹ The Most High sanctifieth His dwelling-place (Jerusalem).

The Hebrew reads: "*There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of Elohim, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.*"

"When the city of God is threatened and encompassed by foes, still she shall not hunger and thirst, nor fear and despair, for the river of grace and of her ordinances and promises flows with its rippling waves through the holy place, where the dwelling-place or tabernacle of the Most High is pitched."²

The city of Jerusalem would not totter to ruin even in such a commotion as that described above (3, 4), because God is in her midst to give aid in due time (in the morning early).

The verse may also mean: "The city shall not totter before the onslaught of her enemies, because God is in her midst to protect her. Nations were troubled and kingdoms fell before the invading hosts, but the city of God had nothing to fear, for the voice of God thunders forth and the very earth trembles. In Hebrew: "*He uttereth His voice, and the earth melts,*" i.e., the earthly powers melt away with fear; "their titanic defiance becomes cowardice, the bonds of confederation slacken, and the strength they have put forth is destroyed."² Assuredly "*the Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our protector.*"

"In God, at whose summons all created powers are obliged to marshal themselves like the hosts of war, Israel has a steep stronghold which can not be scaled by any foe—the army of the confederate peoples and

¹ Cf. Gen. ii. 10.

² Delitzsch.

kingdoms, ere it has reached Jerusalem, is become a field of the dead." ¹

Van Steenkiste and Sedláček interpret verse 7 somewhat differently: "Nations rage and kingdoms rise up bent on the destruction of Jerusalem; God uttereth His voice and they (the earth; the land of the enemy) melt away through fear."

Verses 9-11.—"Come, behold the powerful things (Hebr. *devastation*) that God hath wrought for our protection. By these deeds He hath brought to a close all wars throughout the land, and so weakened our enemies that they can wage no further wars. He breaketh their bows; He destroyeth all their weapons, and their bucklers (Hebr. *war chariots*) He burneth with fire."

God now addresses the hostile nations: "Cease warring against My people. Know that I am God and that all your attempts against Me or against My people are vain. I will be exalted among the nations; I will manifest My power in the whole earth."

If we refer this psalm to the Syrian invasion, the "*wonderful deeds*" or "*devastations*" of verse 9 fittingly describe the destruction of Sennacherib's army. This miraculous event ended the invasion, for Sennacherib "*returned and abode in Ninive*," (4 Kings xix. 36).

Verses 9 and 11 are even more appropriate when referred to the destruction of the allied armies of the Moabites and Ammonites. As a result of this event "*the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. And the kingdom of Josaphat*

¹ Delitzsch.

was quiet, and God gave him peace round about" (2 Par. xx. 29, 30).

This psalm may be interpreted figuratively of the triumph of the Church over all her enemies. There is a foundation in fact for such an interpretation, because the people of God in the Old Law were a figure of the Church—God's people of the New Law.

PSALMUS XLVI

(HEB. XLVII)

- 1 In finem, pro filiis Core,
Psalmus.
- 2 Omnes Gentes, plaudite
manibus;
jubilate Deo in voce ex-
ultationis:
- 3 Quoniam Dominus excelsus,
terribilis,
Rex magnus super omnem
terram.
- 4 Subjecit populos nobis,

et gentes sub pedibus nos-
tris.
- 5 Elegit nobis hereditatem su-
am;
speciem Jacob quam dilexit.
Selah.
- 6 Ascendit Deus in júbilo,

et Dominus in voce tubæ.
- 7 Psallite Deo nostro, psal-
lite;
psallite Regi nostro, psal-
lite;
- 8 Quoniam Rex omnis terræ
Deus:
psallite sapienter.
- 9 Regnabit Deus super gentes;

Deus sedet super sedem
sanctam suam.

PSALM XLVI

(HEB. XLVII)

- 1 Unto the end, for the sons
of Core.
- 2 O clap your hands, all ye
nations:
shout unto God with the
voice of joy,
- 3 for the Lord is high, terrible:

a great king over all the
earth.
- 4 He hath subdued the people
under us;
and the nations under our
feet.
- 5 He hath chosen for us his
inheritance,
the beauty of Jacob which
he hath loved. Selah.
- 6 God is ascended with jubi-
lee,
and the Lord with the
sound of trumpet.
- 7 Sing praises to our God,
sing ye:
sing praises to our king,
sing ye.
- 8 For God is the king of all
the earth:
sing ye wisely.
- 9 God shall reign over the
nations:
God sitteth on his holy
throne.

10 Principes populorum congregati sunt cum Deo Abraham,
quoniam dii fortes terræ vehementer elevati sunt.

10 The princes of the people are gathered together, with the God of Abraham: for the strong gods of the earth are exceedingly exalted.

PSALM XLVI

IF THIS psalm was composed to celebrate the defeat of the armies allied against Josaphat it is difficult to see how the Psalmist could call upon neighboring nations to praise God for their own defeat. For this reason some authors deny that it has any connection with that event. They believe that it was written for use in procession with the Ark of the Covenant; v.g., when it was removed from the house of Obededom to Sion;¹ when it was placed in Solomon's temple;² or perhaps on some occasion when it was brought back in triumph after accompanying the army to some decisive victory. Verse 6 favors this opinion. Against this opinion is the fact that Gentile nations never had any part in such processions.

If we connect this psalm with the destruction of Sennacherib's army the difficulty disappears to some extent, because the nations surrounding Judea were also delivered by the defeat of the Assyrians. The Psalmist could therefore call upon them to praise God for their deliverance. Knabenbauer does not attempt to find any particular historical occasion for it. He simply considers it a psalm in praise of God, the King of all nations. He says: "The kingdom of God set up among the people of Jacob foreshadowed His universal kingdom. The various prophe-

¹ 2 Kings vi.

² 3 Kings viii.

cies against the nations clearly taught that Yahveh is the King and Lord of all. It is not at all surprising, then, that the Psalmist should call upon all nations to praise their King."

Synopsis.—Praise God, for He is king over all the earth (2, 3). He granted us victory and gave us (or, confirmed us in) our possessions (4, 5). God returns from the victory (or, the Ark is carried up) in triumph. Sing the praises of our God and our King—the King who sits enthroned over all nations of the earth (6–10).

Verses 2, 3.—The Psalmist calls upon the nations to join with the people of Israel in praising and glorifying God, because He is a great King exalted above all earthly rulers, most powerful, and awe-inspiring. If this rejoicing and praise is on account of some signal delivery like the destruction of Sennacherib's army, the words of verse 3 express facts that have been manifested to all.

Verses 4, 5.—If these verses refer to some recent victory, they may be interpreted as follows: "God has overturned and subdued the nations that were endeavoring to drive us from the land and dispossess us. Thus has He confirmed the inheritance which He chose for us. His own inheritance has He given to us; the land which He chose for His dwelling-place. This inheritance which God Himself loves is the glory of Israel (Jacob)."

"*Glory of Jacob*" is in apposition with "*inheritance*" both meaning the Promised Land granted anew to Israel by the overthrow of would-be spoilers.

The Hebrew text reads: "*He chooses for us our inheritance; the glory of Jacob whom He loves.*" To

Esau God gave the mountains of Seir,¹ but to Jacob whom He especially loved was assigned the Land of Promise, flowing with milk and honey.

It seems more natural to take these verses as a reference to the subjugation and occupation of the land of Chanaan, which was accomplished by divine assistance: "*For they got not the possession of the land by their own sword; neither did their own hand save them. But Thy right hand and Thy arm, and the light of Thy countenance.*" (Ps. xliii. 4.)

The Psalmist adduces this as proof that God is king over all nations.

Verses 6-8.—God is represented as having descended to fight in behalf of His people. The victory is won and He now ascends again amidst shouts of joyful thanksgiving. (Cf. Gen. xvii. 22.) "*And when He had left off speaking with him, God went up from Abraham.*"

The Psalmist, carried away with enthusiasm, cries out again and again:

*"Sing praises² to our God, sing ye!
Sing praises to our king, sing ye!
For God is king of all the earth;
Sing ye songs of praise!"*³

Taking the psalm as a processional hymn, verses 6-8 fittingly describe the triumphal procession ascending the hill of Sion with the Ark of the Covenant. These verses are then nicely connected with the preceding by adopting the reading of the Roman

¹ Deut. ii. 5.

² Literally, "play the harp."

³ The Septuagint and Vulgate take the Hebrew "*maskil*" adverbially to mean "*intelligently*." It may also be taken as a noun "*a hymn*." See p. 236.

Psalter for verse 5: "*He chose us as an inheritance for Himself,*" i.e., "He has chosen as His inheritance the glory of Jacob which He will occupy as His dwelling place on earth. He now ascends the hill of Sion in triumphal procession to take up His abode."

Verses 9, 10.—These verses foretell the universality of God's kingdom realized by the conversion of the Gentiles. Thus is fulfilled the promise made to Abraham: "*In thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed.*"¹

It is difficult to get any meaning from verse 10 as it stands in the Vulgate.

The Hebrew reads:

*"The princes of the peoples gather themselves together,
A people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth are God's,
Very highly exalted is He."*

God has taken His throne in heaven (or, on Sion) whence He rules over all nations and all peoples. Gentile nations (princes of the peoples)—the rulers (shields)² of the earth—will turn to God and become His people. God is highly exalted above all nations and all earthly rulers.

We know of no historical fact to which verse 10 may be referred. We are therefore warranted in taking it as a prophecy fulfilled by the conversion of the nations to the Church of Christ.

The Church applies this psalm to the Ascension of Christ.

¹ Gen. xii. 3.

² "*Shields*" is used here, as in *Osee* iv. 18, to mean "rulers," or "protectors."

PSALMUS XLVII

(HEB. XLVIII)

- 1 Psalmus cantici, filiis Core,
secunda sabbati.
- 2 Magnus Dominus et lauda-
bilis nimis,
in civitate Dei nostri, in
monte sancto ejus.
- 3 Fundatur exultatione uni-
versæ terræ mons Sion;

latera aquilonis, civitas Re-
gis magni.
- 4 Deus in domibus ejus cog-
noscetur
cum suscipiet eam.
- 5 Quoniam ecce reges terræ
congregati sunt,

convenerunt in unum.
- 6 Ipsi videntes, sic admirati
sunt, conturbati sunt,
commoti sunt.
- 7 Tremor apprehendit eos;
Ibi dolores ut parturientis:
- 8 in spiritu vehementi con-
teres naves Tharsis.
- 9 Sicut audivimus, sic vidi-
mus,
in civitate Domini virtu-
tum,
in civitate Dei nostri.

PSALM XLVII

(HEB. XLVIII)

- 1 A psalm of a canticle, for
the sons of Core, on the
second day of the week.
- 2 Great is the Lord and ex-
ceedingly to be praised .
in the city of our God, in his
holy mountain.
- 3 With the joy of the whole
earth is mount Sion
founded,
on the sides of the north,
the city of the great king.
- 4 In her houses shall God be
known,
when he shall protect her.
- 5 For behold the kings of the
earth assembled them-
selves:
they gathered together.
- 6 So they saw, and they
wondered, they were
troubled, they were
moved:
- 7 trembling took hold of them.
There were pains as of a
woman in labor.
- 8 With a vehement wind thou
shalt break in pieces the
ships of Tharsis.
- 9 As we have heard, so we
have seen,
in the city of the Lord of
hosts,
in the city of our God:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>Deus fundavit eam in æternum. Selah.</p> <p>10 Suscepimus, Deus, misericordiam tuam, in medio templi tui.</p> <p>11 Secundum nomen tuum, Deus, sic et laus tua in fines terræ. Justitia plena est dextera tua.</p> <p>12 Lætetur mons Sion, et exultent filiæ Judæ, propter judicia tua, Domine.</p> <p>13 Circumdate Sion, et complectimini eam; narrate in turribus ejus.</p> <p>14 Ponite corda vestra in virtute ejus, et distribuite domos ejus, ut enarretis in progenie altera.</p> <p>15 Quoniam hic est Deus, Deus noster in æternum, et in sæculum sæculi; ipse reget nos in sæcula.</p> | <p>God hath founded it for ever. Selah.</p> <p>10 We have received thy mercy, O God, in the midst of thy temple.</p> <p>11 According to thy name, O God, so also is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of justice.</p> <p>12 Let mount Sion rejoice, and the daughters of Juda be glad; because of thy judgments, O Lord.</p> <p>13 Surround Sion, and encompass her: tell ye in her towers.</p> <p>14 Set your hearts on her strength; and distribute her houses, that ye may relate it in another generation.</p> <p>15 For this is God, our God unto eternity, and for ever and ever: he shall rule us for evermore.</p> |
|---|--|

PSALM XLVII

THIS psalm is usually taken in connection with Psalms xlv, xlvi, as a thanksgiving for some signal deliverance of Jerusalem from an invading army, perhaps that of Sennacherib, or of the nations allied against Josaphat.

"The song of thanksgiving for victory has become a song in praise of Jerusalem, the glorious and strong city, protected by God who sits enthroned in it. The mention of the kings points to an army of confederates; verse 10 points to the gather-

ing held in the temple before the setting out of the army; and the figurative representation of the hostile powers by the shattered ships of Tarshish does not apply to any period so well as to the time of Jehoshaphat."¹

The ships which Josaphat built to go to Tharsis were destroyed because he had entered into a partnership with Ochozias, the wicked king of Israel.²

Synopsis.—Praiseworthy is God who dwells in Sion, the impregnable mountain (2, 3). God shows Himself her unfailing protector (4). Kings banded together against her but were driven back and destroyed by the hand of God (5-9). Therefore do we praise His mercy and justice (10-12). Inspect her walls; her towers; her ramparts; and see for yourself that God has suffered no harm to the city (13, 14). Such is our God for ever and ever! (15).

Verse 1.—“*Secunda sabbati—second (day) of the week*” is not found in Hebrew. It is probably an indication that the Greek-speaking synagogues used this psalm in their liturgy on Mondays.

Verses 2, 3.—“Great is the Lord and highly to be praised in Jerusalem where He sits enthroned in His sanctuary on Mount Sion. Firmly stands Mount Sion, a joy to all the land (of the Israelites). On the sides to the north stands Jerusalem, the city of the great King³ the capital of the theocracy.”

The Hebrew of verse 3 is usually rendered: “*Beautifully elevated, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Sion, the angle of the north, the city of the great King.*” The Hebrew word “*noph*” (here rendered “*elevated*”) occurs nowhere else in Sacred

¹ Delitzsch.

² 2 Par. xx. 35 et seq.; 3 Kings xxii. 49.

³ Cf. Matt. v. 35.

Scripture; consequently its meaning is conjectural. The Septuagint and Vulgate render it as noted above, giving the idea of a stronghold, a place well fortified.

Verse 4.—The meaning of this verse is clearer in Hebrew: “*God makes Himself known in her palaces for a high tower,*” i.e., God shows Himself the protector of the city as narrated in the following verses.

Verses 5–8.—Hostile kings assembled by appointment and marched on together planning to destroy Jerusalem. When they saw the city, its defences, its defenders, and something more which is not indicated made them pause in amazement. Then the trembling of terror seized upon them like the pains of a woman in travail. “Yea, Lord, Thou didst destroy them as Thou dost shatter large vessels with a furious gale.” “The amazement is balanced with the seeing, corresponding with it, implying that they saw with amazement something that seriously alarmed them, some manifestation of Yahveh. The author is thinking of a theophany that frightened them and threw them into a panic.”¹

“*Ships of Tharsis*” does not necessarily mean ships that go to Tharsis, but any large ships like those built for trade with Tharsis. Isaias also compares the Assyrians to “*ships with oars*” and “*a great galley.*”²

If we connect this psalm with the destruction of Sennacherib’s army, the kings of verse 5 are the generals of his army. He himself says of them: “*Are not my princes so many kings?*”³

Verse 9.—“We have heard from our fathers how God protected and delivered the city in times past. Now we see with our own eyes a wonderful

¹ Briggs.

² Is. xxxiii. 21.

³ Is. x. 9.

example of His loving protection. He has founded the city and will continue to make it a stronghold against its enemies: God upholdeth her forever."

This verse may also mean: "We have seen accomplished what was foretold us regarding this wonderful deliverance." (Cf. the prophecy of Jahaziel, 2 Par. xx. 15-17.)

Verses 10-12.—"Assembled in Thy temple for thanksgiving, we gratefully recall¹ all Thy tender mercy and especially this, its latest manifestation. Be Thou praised wherever Thy name is known—even to the ends of the earth, for Thy right hand is filled with deeds of justice. Let Jerusalem rejoice and let the cities and villages (daughters) of Juda be glad because of Thine acts of judgment—deliverance of the righteous and just punishment of the wicked."

Some interpreters take verse 10 as a reference to the meeting held in the Temple when it was known that the allied kings were advancing toward the city. It is related that "*Josaphat stood in the midst of the assembly of Juda in the house of the Lord*" and prayed. He recalled to mind favors hitherto shown the people that he might arouse hopes for the present. (Cf. 2 Par. xx. 4, et seq.)

Verses 13, 14.—The Psalmist invites all to examine the city and see for themselves that not a stone has been disturbed although complete destruction seemed imminent. "Go round about Sion; make a complete circuit thereof. Take note of her towers (tell, enumerate her towers); mark well her ramparts, closely inspect her palaces and see that the spoiler's hand has touched nothing of it all. Mark all this, that you may recount to the next generation the

¹ Heb. "to compare," "to meditate," "to ponder."

wonderful deliverance that God has wrought for us."

"*Narrate in turribus*" (13) should probably be "*narrate de turribus*," or simply "*narrate turres*." The Hebrew word means "to count," "to enumerate."

These verses indicate that the hostile troops were at the very gates of the city. This would point to the invasion of the Assyrians rather than that of the allied kings at the time of Josaphat. (Cf. *4 Kings* xviii. 17.) The Assyrian army "*came up to Jerusalem, and they stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the way of the fuller's field.*"

Verse 15.—"This God—the God who wrought such wonderful deliverance—is our God for ever and ever. He shall rule us for evermore." This may be a chorus by the people. It may also be connected with the preceding, thus: "Mark all these things that you may tell another generation that the God who did this is our God for ever, etc."

PSALMUS XLVIII

(HEB. XLIX)

- 1 In finem, filiis Core, Psalmus.
- 2 Audite hæc, omnes Gentes:
auribus percipite, omnes qui
habitationis orbem;
- 3 Quique terrigenæ, et filii
hominum:
simul in unum dives et
pauper.
- 4 Os meum loquetur sapien-
tiam,
et meditatio cordis mei pru-
dentiam.
- 5 Inclinationem in parabolam
aurum meam;
aperiam in psalterio pro-
positionem meam.
- 6 Cur timebo in die mala?
iniquitas calcanei mei cir-
cumdabit me.
- 7 Qui confidunt in virtute sua,
et in multitudine divitiarum
suarum gloriantur.
- 8 Frater non redimit, redimet
homo?
non dabit Deo placationem
suam,
- 9 et pretium redemptionis ani-
mæ suæ.
Et laborabit in æternum;
- 10 et vivet adhuc in finem.

PSALM XLVIII

(HEB. XLIX)

- 1 Unto the end, a psalm for
the sons of Core.
- 2 Hear these things, all ye
nations:
give ear, all ye inhabitants
of the world.
- 3 All you that are earthborn,
and you sons of men:
both rich and poor together.
- 4 My mouth shall speak wis-
dom:
and the meditation of my
heart understanding.
- 5 I will incline my ear to
a parable;
I will open my proposition
on the psaltery.
- 6 Why shall I fear in the evil
day?
the iniquity of my heel
shall encompass me.
- 7 They that trust in their
own strength,
and glory in the multitude
of their riches,
- 8 no brother *can* redeem, *nor*
shall man redeem:
he shall not give to God his
ransom,
- 9 nor the price of the redemp-
tion of his soul:
and shall labor forever.
- 10 and shall still live unto the
end,

- 11 Non videbit interitum cum
viderit sapientes mori-
entes.

Simul insipiens, et stultus
peribunt;
et relinquent alienis divitias
suas;

- 12 et sepulcra eorum domus
illorum in æternum.

Tabernacula eorum in pro-
genie et progenie;
vocaverunt nomina sua in
terris suis.

Refrain

- 13 Et homo, cum in honore
esset, non intellexit.

Comparatus est jumentis in-
sipientibus, et similis fac-
tus est illis.

- 14 Hæc via illorum scandalum
ipsis;

et postea in ore suo com-
placebunt. *Selah.*

- 15 Sicut oves in inferno positi
sunt;

mors depascet eos.

Et dominabuntur eorum
justi in matutino;

et auxilium eorum veterascet
in inferno a gloria eorum.

- 16 Verumtamen Deus redimet
animam meam de manu
inferi,

cum acceperit me.
Selah.

- 17 Ne timueris cum dives fac-
tus fuerit homo,

et cum multiplicata fuerit
gloria domus ejus;

- 18 Quoniam cum interierit, non
sumet omnia,

neque descendet cum eo
gloria ejus.

- 11 He shall not see destruction,
when he shall see the wise
dying:

the senseless and the fool
shall perish together:

And they shall leave their
riches to strangers:

- 12 and their sepulchres shall be
their houses for ever.

Their dwelling places to all
generations:

they have called their lands
by their names.

Refrain

- 13 And man when he was in
honor did not understand;

he is compared to senseless
beasts, and is become like
to them.

- 14 This way of theirs is a
stumbling block to them:

and afterward they shall
delight in their mouth.

- 15 They are laid in hell like
sheep:

death shall feed upon them,
and the just shall have do-
minion over them in the

morning;

and their help shall decay
in hell from their glory.

- 16 But God will redeem my
soul from the hand of hell,

when he shall receive me.
Selah.

- 17 Be not thou afraid, when a
man shall be made rich,

and when the glory of his
house shall be increased.

- 18 For when he shall die he
shall take nothing away;

nor shall his glory descend
with him.

19 Quia anima ejus in vita
ipsius benedicetur;
confitebitur tibi cum bene-
feceris ei.

20 Introibit usque in progenies
patrum suorum;
et usque in æternum non
videbit lumen.

19 For in his lifetime his soul
will be blessed:

and he will praise thee when
thou shalt do well to him.

20 He shall go in to the gene-
rations of his fathers:
and he shall never see light.

Refrain

21 Homo, cum in honore esset,
non intellexit.

Comparatus est jumentis
insipientibus, et similis
factus est illis.

Refrain

21 Man when he was in honor
did not understand:

he hath been compared to
senseless beasts, and made
like to them.

PSALM XLVIII

THIS psalm is very difficult to understand. In many places the Septuagint and Vulgate are very obscure and the Hebrew text is but little better. Many think the text has been corrupted. The general meaning of the psalm, however, is evident.

"Its close connection with Psalms xxxvi and lxxii is obvious at a glance; they deal with the anomalies of this life, the prosperity of the wicked, the afflictions of the just. But, while in Psalm xxxvi the rectification is looked for in some turn of fortune brought about by God's fatherly care for His faithful servants, in this and in lxxii the issue, which is to justify God's ways to men, is prorogued to the life to come. In both psalms we are impressed with the poet's firm conviction that in the next world there will be a due apportionment of rewards and of punishments. In Psalm lxxii the author unveils to us his inner conflict with unbelief, while here the poet's faith is firmly established; his utterance is that of a teacher."¹

After an introduction (2-5) the psalm is divided into two parts (6-12 and 14-20) by a refrain (13, 21).

Synopsis.—Introduction, in which the author calls

¹ M'Swiney.

upon all to attend (2-5). The just have no reason to fear the wicked (6), because in spite of riches and honors they must die like other men (7-12). Refrain (13). The wicked must leave their riches and will be consigned to "*sheol*" for ever, but God will deliver the just (14-20). Refrain (21).

Verses 2, 3.—The poet calls upon all, high and low, rich and poor, because all alike stand in need of his instruction. He will teach the rich the utter nothingness of worldly goods in which they trust; he will instruct the poor regarding hope for the future.

"The earth-born" (Heb. "sons of mankind"—"*fili hominum*") are the lowly, the poor, the common people. "Sons of men" (Hebr. "sons of man"—"*fili viri*") are the nobles and the rich, the high born. (Cf. *Ps.* iv. 3.) The next line explains the poet's meaning: "*both the rich and the poor together.*"

Verses 4, 5.—"Attend to my instructions, for my mouth will speak words of wisdom in regard to matters that I have long pondered in my own heart. I will incline my ear to catch the inspiration of the parable and I will expound it in song to the accompaniment of the lyre."

Some explain verse 5 to mean: "I will incline my ear to the whisperings of divine inspiration and I will explain or set forth my theme (Hebr. *enigma*, a difficult or puzzling question) in song," etc. Others interpret it as above. "I will incline my ear to the parable, i.e., I will study my theme that I may be able to handle it understandingly." It may also mean that the poet intends to apply himself to the parables or sayings of wise men.

Verse 6.—The Psalmist now introduces his puzzling theme—the prosperity of the wicked and the afflictions of the righteous. He has solved the question for himself by study and meditation. He starts out to instruct others by putting the question: “Why should I fear in days of evil when deceitful enemies encompass me with iniquity?”

“*Iniquity of my heel*” is an obscure expression, and at first sight seems to suggest sins of the Psalmist. The context forbids this interpretation, for he is one of the suffering just and there is no question of sin on their part. Delitzsch notes that the Hebrew word for “*heel*” may also mean “supplanter.” Adopting this meaning gives us the marginal reading of the Revised Version, “*the iniquity of them that would supplant me compasseth me about.*” This agrees with the reading of the Syriac version and the text of Origen.

Verses 7–12.—The probable meaning of these verses according to the Vulgate may be summed up as follows: “These wicked enemies trust in their own strength and glory in the abundance of their riches, but in vain. All their wealth can not purchase for them a stay of death nor redeem their souls from just punishment. A man may pay ransom for his life as the law provides:¹ he may even purchase immunity for murder, but when God demands his life, no ransom is possible. He would not be able to pay the price of ransom though he should live and labor, hoarding up treasures, for ever. Does the wicked man hope to escape death and punishment (*interitum*) when he sees that the wise die, and the stupid and brutish likewise perish, leaving

¹ Ex. xxi. 30.

their riches to others! The grave becomes their house—their dwelling-place forever. To such an end have they come! They who once gloried in their broad possessions are now reduced to the narrow limits of the grave!”

In the first member of verse 8 we may take the second part as a question: “A brother can not redeem. Will another man be able to do so?” In other words, no one is able to redeem another. We may also extend the negative of the first part to the second as in the Douay Version: “A brother redeems not, neither shall any man redeem.”

In Hebrew verses 8–12 read differently:

8. “*A man is not able by any means to redeem his brother,
Nor can he give to God a ransom for him,*
9. *(Too costly is the redemption of their soul,
And he must give it up for ever)*
10. *That he should live continually,
[And] not see the grave.*
11. *No, indeed, he must see that wise men die,
Likewise the fool and the stupid man perish,
And leave to others their wealth.*
12. *Their thought is that their houses are for ever,
Their dwellings from generation to generation:
They proclaim their names over lands.”*

In order to get any connection of thought, verse 9 must be taken as a parenthesis. The meaning then becomes: “A man can not give a ransom to stay the hand of death that he may live for ever and not see the grave. The price of redemption is too great; he must give up all thought of it.”

In verse 12 the reading of the Vulgate is more in accord with the context and is preferred by Ewald, Briggs, and others.

The last phrase of verse 12 is obscure. It probably means that they had landed possessions in their name; the lands were known and spoken of by the name of the owners.

Verse 13.—“When surrounded by wealth and honors man does not act wisely. He lives like the dumb brutes, and like them he perishes miserably.”

“*Man*” may also be taken in a plural sense referring back to verse 12: “When these men were surrounded by wealth and honors they acted not wisely,” etc.

The Hebrew text gives this verse a better connection with what precedes:

*“But man in pomp hath no abiding,
He is like the beasts that perish.”*

“They who trust in their riches and boast of their broad acres are soon numbered with the dead, for man does not long abide on earth. He must die even as the very beasts of the field, and leave behind him all his treasures.”

Verse 14.—“The course which they pursue (trusting in their own strength and riches) leads but to their ruin; yet those who come after them will approve their sayings. Notwithstanding the evidence of blasted hopes, others will adopt the same views and follow the same course of life.”

Comparison with the Hebrew shows that the second part of verse 14 should be rendered: “Afterward others will delight in their sayings (mouth).” The Hebrew may also be interpreted: “This is also the lot of those who, following them, yield assent to their sayings.”

Verse 15.—The lot of the wicked is further de-

scribed. "They are gathered down into the gloomy abode of the dead as sheep are folded for the night. Death shall be their shepherd. (Vulg. *death shall feed on them*): they shall be forever under the dominion of death."

"After the night of affliction has swiftly passed away there breaks forth for the upright a morning; and in this morning they find themselves to be lords over these their oppressors, like conquerors, who put their feet upon the necks of the vanquished."¹ "The wicked are wasting away in the dark abode of *sheol* far from their former glory (Hebr. dwelling)."

In the Vulgate: "*Their help shall decay*," etc., i.e., death separates them from the riches in which they trusted and they exchange their dwellings on earth for an everlasting abode in the land of death (*sheol*).

"The just shall have dominion over them" might also be rendered: "The just shall tread upon them, i.e., although the wicked are now in prosperity the just will soon (in the morning) be treading o'er their graves while they are wasting away in *sheol*."

Verse 16.—The Psalmist now opposes the future of the just to that of the wicked. Speaking in the name of all the just, he says: "The wicked shall be consigned to *sheol*, the dark abode of the wicked dead who there suffer the just punishments of their sins; but God will deliver me from that nether world for He will take me to Himself—to the paradise of the righteous dead."

Verses 17–20.—From the preceding considerations the Psalmist draws the conclusion already

¹ Delitzsch.

stated in verse 6. "Be not vexed by the prosperity of the wicked. Fear not when a man becomes rich and the glory of his house increases. He must die even as the beasts of the field and all his wealth will be of no avail. His riches and his glory can not follow him to the land of the dead; he must leave all behind. While living he congratulates himself upon his riches and prosperity and others flatter him,¹ but he goes down to the realm of the dead—to the generations of his fathers—where he shall dwell for ever in the dominions of death; he shall not see light for ever."

Verse 19 is very obscure. The meaning given above is only probable. Briggs renders it thus:

*"Though in his lifetime he congratulated his soul,
And lauded it because it was doing well to itself."*

The Psalmist now repeats the refrain of verse 13.

¹ Cf. Luke xii. 19, 20.

PSALMUS XLIX

(HEB. L)

¹ Psalmus Asaph.
Deus deorum, Dominus, locutus est,
et vocavit terram a solis
ortu usque ad occasum.

^{2,3} Ex Sion species decoris
ejus: ¹ Deus manifeste ve-
niet;
Deus noster, et non silebit.

Ignis in conspectu ejus exar-
descet;
et in circuitu ejus tempestas
valida.

⁴ Advocabit coelum desursum,
et terram, discernere popu-
lum suum.

⁵ Congregate illi sanctos ejus,
qui ordinant testamentum
ejus super sacrificia.

⁶ Et annuntiabunt cœli jus-
titiam ejus,
quoniam Deus judex est.
Selah.

⁷ Audi, populus meus, et
loquar;
Israel, et testificabor tibi.

Deus, Deus, tuus ego sum.

PSALM XLIX

(HEB. L)

¹ A psalm for Asaph.
The God of gods, the Lord
hath spoken:
and he hath called the
earth. From the rising
of the sun to the going
down thereof:

^{2,3} out of Sion the loveliness of
his beauty.¹ God shall
come manifestly:
our God *shall come*, and
shall not keep silence.
A fire shall burn before him:

and a mighty tempest *shall*
be round about him.

⁴ He shall call heaven from
above,
and the earth, to judge his
people.

⁵ Gather ye together his saints
to him:
who set his covenant before
sacrifices.

⁶ And the heavens shall de-
clare his justice:
for God is judge.
Selah.

⁷ Hear, O my people, and I
will speak:

O Israel, and I will testify
to thee:

I am God, thy god.

¹ Verse 3 begins here.

- 8 Non in sacrificiis tuis arguam te;
holocausta autem tua in conspectu meo sunt semper.
- 9 Non accipiam de domo tua vitulos,
neque de gregibus tuis hircos.
- 10 Quoniam meæ sunt omnes ferræ silvarum.
jumenta in montibus, et boves.
- 11 Cognovi omnia volatilia cœli;
et pulchritudo agri mecum est.
- 12 Si esurio, non dicam tibi;
meus est enim orbis terræ,
et plenitudo ejus.
- 13 Numquid manducabo carnes taurorum?
aut sanguinem hircorum potabo?
- 14 Immola Deo sacrificium laudis,
et redde Altissimo vota tua.
- 15 Et invoca me in die tribulationis;
eruum te, et honorificabis me.
- 16 Peccatori autem dixit Deus:
Quare tu enarras justitias meas?
Et assumis testamentum meum per os tuum?
- 17 Tu vero odisti disciplinam,
et projecisti sermones meos retrorsum.
- 8 I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices:
and thy burnt offerings are always in my sight.
- 9 I will not take calves out of thy house:
nor he goats out of thy flocks.
- 10 For all the beasts of the woods are mine:
the cattle on the hills, and the oxen.
- 11 I know all the fowls of the air:
and with me is the beauty of the field.
- 12 If I should be hungry, I would not tell thee:
for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.
- 13 Shall I eat the flesh of bullocks?
or shall I drink the blood of goats?
- 14 Offer to God the sacrifice of praise:
and pay thy vows to the most High.
- 15 And call upon me in the day of trouble:
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.
- 16 But to the sinner God hath said:
Why dost thou declare my justices,
and take my covenant in thy mouth?
- 17 Seeing thou hast hated discipline:
and hast cast my words behind thee.

- 18 Si videbas furem, currebas cum eo;
et cum adulteris portionem tuam ponebas.
- 19 Os tuum abundavit malitia;
et lingua tua concinnabat dolos.
- 20 Sedens, adversus fratrem tuum loquebaris,
et adversus filium matris tuæ ponebas scandalum.
- 21 Hæc fecisti, et tacui.
Existimasti inique quod ero tui similis:
arguam te, et statuam contra faciem tuam.
- 22 Intelligite hæc, qui obliviscimini Deum;
nequando rapiat, et non sit qui eripiat.
- 23 Sacrificium laudis honorificabit me;
et illic iter quo ostendam illi salutare Dei.
- 18 If thou didst see a thief thou didst run with him:
and with adulterers thou hast been a partaker.
- 19 Thy mouth hath abounded with evil,
and thy tongue framed deceits.
- 20 Sitting thou didst speak against thy brother,
and didst lay a scandal against thy mother's son:
- 21 these things hast thou done,
and I was silent.
Thou thoughtest unjustly that I should be like to thee:
but I will reprove thee, and set before thy face.
- 22 Understand these things, you that forget God;
lest he snatch you away,
and there be none to deliver you.
- 23 The sacrifice of praise shall glorify me:
and there is the way by which I will shew him the salvation of God.

PSALM XLIX

ASAPH was one of the three choirmasters appointed by David to direct the sacred music; he is also mentioned as a writer of sacred song. "*Ezechias and the princes commanded the Levites to praise God with the words of David and Asaph the seer*" (2 Paral. xxix. 30). Descendants of Asaph are mentioned in the time of Josaphat and Ezechias, and Esdras states that one hundred and twenty-eight singing men, children of Asaph, were among the

exiles who returned to Jerusalem under Zorobabel.¹ It is probable that some of the psalms bearing the name of Asaph are the work of his descendants.

Twelve psalms have the inscription "*to Asaph.*" They are all Elohimic² and distinguished by their prophetically judicial character. As in the prophets, God is frequently introduced as speaking; and we meet with detailed prophetic pictures of the appearing of God the Judge, together with long judicial addresses. There are many references to the events of Jewish history; in fact Psalm lxxvii is almost entirely taken up with a review of the nation's history. The relation of God to His chosen people is frequently represented as that of a shepherd to his flock.³

This psalm is a condemnation of formalism and hypocrisy. (Cf. 1 Kings xv. 22.) "*Doth the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed? For obedience is better than sacrifices: and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams.*" (Isaias xxix. 13): "*This people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips glorify Me, but their heart is far from Me.*"

Synopsis.—God is coming to reprove His people (1-3) and calls heaven and earth to witness the justice of His judgments (4-6). He censures mere externalism in offering sacrifice (7-13) and demands worship in spirit and in truth (14, 15). He rebukes those who feign a zealous regard for the Law while

¹ 2 Esdras ii. 41.

² That is, the divine name "*Elohim*" is used oftener than "*Yahveh*."

³ Adapted from Delitzsch.

living entirely at variance with it (16-21). A warning to sinners (22, 23).

Verses 1-3.—God is represented as about to appear in vindication of the Law delivered on Mount Sinai amidst thunder and lightning. “The mighty Lord, the God of Israel hath spoken; He hath summoned the whole earth, *from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof*, to witness the judgment He is about to give. From Sion the beautiful city; from His dwelling in the Tabernacle He shall come forth in a raging tempest.¹ When He appears He will not remain silent; He will assuredly raise His voice in condemnation of sin.”

The accumulation of divine names, “*El Elohim Yahveh*,” in verse 1 is also found in *Josue* xxii. 22, where the Vulgate renders it “*the Lord the most mighty God*.” “*God of gods the Lord*” is misleading, as it naturally suggests that God is the Lord of heathen gods. “*El*” means the strong or mighty one, the Almighty; “*Elohim*” is the revered one, the Lord; “*Yahveh*” is the Covenant name of God.

Comparison with the Hebrew shows that “*the loveliness of his beauty*” is in apposition with Sion—Sion the beautiful. (Cf. *Lam.* ii. 15.) “*The city of perfect beauty, the joy of all the earth*.” The Hebrew reads: “*Out of Sion the perfection of beauty*.”

Verses 4-6.—God calls heaven and earth to witness the judgment of His people. (Cf. *Deut.* iv. 26.) “*I will call this day heaven and earth to witness*,” etc. Those to be judged are now summoned to appear. “Bring before the Lord His chosen ones”—those bound to Him in a special manner by the Covenant which was confirmed by sacrifices and sealed by the

¹ Cf. *Ex.* xix. 16; *Job* xxxviii. 1; *Ps.* xvii.

shedding of blood. (Cf. *Ex.* xxiv.) God is about to judge them in regard to their observance of this Covenant. The heavens, called to witness the scene, even now foretell that full justice will be given, because God Himself is the Judge.

According to the Vulgate it is the Psalmist who speaks in verse 5. In the Hebrew it is God: "*Gather unto Me My saints.*"

The above interpretation is followed by most authors. A meaning equally well suited to the context may be had by taking "saints" as a reference to Moses and the elders. God calls heaven and earth to witness the judgment He is about to give in regard to observance of the Covenant which was made with His saints—Moses and the elders—and confirmed by them with sacrifices. Therefore He also calls these, His saints, as witnesses against those to be judged.

Verse 7.—God now addresses the people, demanding attention: "Hearken, My people, and I will speak what I have to say in this case. Listen, ye people of Israel, and I will solemnly admonish and reprove you in the presence of witnesses. With full authority do I speak, for I am the Lord thy God."

Verses 8-13.—"It is not for lack of sacrifices that I reprove you. You offer them in abundance; they are continually before Me. I reprove you for the spirit in which you offer them. The external act of sacrifice is not sufficient. I demand more than the mere offering of victims. I need not your calves and he-goats. I do not ask sacrifices because I stand in need of your offerings. All the beasts of the woods are mine; the cattle on the hills and the oxen (Hebr. the cattle on the hills where thousands roam), the

fowls of the air are mine, and all that is in the fields. Were I hungry I would not stand in need of man's help, for the world is mine and the fulness thereof. But I am far removed from such carnal desires. Need I the flesh of bulls and the blood of goats? Far be it from Me."

Verses 14, 15.—God is a spiritual being free from all trace of carnal desires; therefore He needs not the offering of material victims. Even had He need of these things He would not ask them at the hands of man, for the earth and its fulness is His. Why, then, does He demand sacrifice? Simply as an outward expression and symbol of man's inward love and devotion. Therefore offer to God the sacrifice of praise. Offer to Him the inward acts of love and adoration that are symbolized by the external act of sacrifice. Offer real, sincere sacrifice and pay the votive offerings you have vowed. Then will He hear you in the day of trouble. When you call to Him in the time of need He will deliver you and you shall glorify Him with thanksgiving and praise.

Verses 16-21.—God is now represented as addressing Himself to another class of sinners, even more reprehensible than the former. He denounces the hypocrisy of those who profess great zeal for the Law while living entirely at variance with it. St. Paul develops the same thought in his Epistle to the Romans, ii. 17-24. The most withering denunciations of our divine Lord were directed against this form of hypocrisy "which reached its culminating point on the morning of the great Passover when its votaries scrupled to enter the judgment-hall of Pilate but scrupled not to put the Son of God to death." ¹

¹ Higgins,

“ It ill behooveth thee to be recounting My precepts and admonishing others of My commandments when thou thyself despisest instruction and turnest thy back upon these same commandments. Truly hast thou despised My commandments, for thou hast had part with thieves and adulterers; thou hast given free rein to thy evil tongue. Thou hast deliberately spoken (sat down and spoken) evil against thy nearest friend, even against thy own brother and so brought reproach (scandal) upon him. Thou didst all this and because I suffered it in silence and meted out no punishment, thou didst wickedly imagine that, like thee, I cared not for these things, but even took delight in them. Thou art sadly mistaken, for I will reprove thee and set before thee all these sins to thy condemnation.”

Verse 22.—“ Consider these things, all ye that forget God, lest He seize upon you and there be none to deliver you, for *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*”¹

Verse 23.—This verse returns to the thought expressed in verses 14, 15. “ The real sacrifice—the sacrifice of praise—shall glorify me, and he that offers it prepares the way by which I will give him the salvation of God.”

The Hebrew is variously rendered: “ *Whoso offereth thanksgiving, honoreth Me truly, and prepareth a way, in which I may show him the salvation of God;*” or “ *Whoso offereth thanksgiving glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his course aright, I will show the salvation of God.*”

¹ Heb. x. 31.

PSALMUS L

HEB. (LI)

- 1 In finem, Psalmus David,
- 2 cum venit ad eum Nathan
Propheta, quando intra-
vit ad Bethsabée.
- 3 Miserere mei, Deus, secun-
dum magnam misericor-
diam tuam;
et secundum multitudinem
miserationum tuarum, de-
le iniquitatem meam.
- 4 Amplius lava me ab ini-
quitate mea,
et a peccato meo munda
me.
- 5 Quoniam iniquitatem meam
ego cognosco:
et peccatum meum contra
me est semper.
- 6 Tibi soli peccavi,
et malum coram te feci;

ut justificeris in sermonibus
tuis,
et vincas cum judicaris.
- 7 Ecce enim in iniquitatibus
conceptus sum,
et in peccatis concepit me
mater mea.
- 8 Ecce enim veritatem di-
lexisti;

PSALM L

(HEB. LI)

- 1 Unto the end, a psalm of
David,
- 2 when Nathan the prophet
came to him, after he had
sinned with Bethsabée.
- 3 Have mercy on me, O God,
according to thy great
mercy.
And according to the multi-
tude of thy tender mer-
cies blot out my iniquity.
- 4 Wash me yet more from my
iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 5 For I know my iniquity,

and my sin is always before
me.
- 6 To thee only have I sinned,
and have done evil before
thee:
that thou mayst be justi-
fied in thy words,
and mayst overcome when
thou art judged.
- 7 For behold I was conceived
in iniquities;
and in sins did my mother
conceive me.
- 8 For behold thou hast loved
truth:

incerta et occulta sapientiæ
tuæ manifestasti mihi.

the uncertain and hidden
things of thy wisdom thou
hast made manifest to me.

9 Asperges me hyssopo, et
mundabor;

9 Thou shalt sprinkle me with
hyssop, and I shall be
cleansed:

lavabis me, et super nivem
dealbabor.

thou shalt wash me and I
shall be made whiter than
snow.

10 Auditui meo dabis gaudium
et lætitiā,
et exultabunt ossa humili-
ata.

10 To my hearing thou shalt
give joy and gladness:
and the bones that have
been humbled shall rejoice.

11 Averte faciem tuam a pec-
catis meis,
et omnes iniquitates meas
dele.

11 Turn away thy face from
my sins,
and blot out all my in-
iquities.

12 Cor mundum crea in me,
Deus,
et spiritum rectum innova
in visceribus meis.

12 Create a clean heart in me,
O God:
and renew a right spirit
within my bowels.

13 Ne projicias me a facie tua,
et spiritum sanctum tuum
ne auferas a me.

13 Cast me not away from thy
face;
and take not thy holy spirit
from me.

14 Redde mihi lætitiā salu-
taris tui,
et spiritu principali con-
firma me.

14 Restore unto me the joy of
thy salvation,
and strengthen me with a
perfect spirit.

15 Docebo iniquos vias tuas;
et impii ad te convertentur.

15 I will teach the unjust thy
ways:
and the wicked shall be
converted to thee.

16 Libera me de sanguinibus,
Deus, Deus salutis meæ,

16 Deliver me from blood, O
God, thou God of my
salvation:

et exultabit lingua mea
justitiā tuam.

and my tongue shall extol
thy justice.

17 Domine, labia mea aperies;

17 O Lord, thou wilt open my
lips:

et os meum annuntiabit
laudem tuam.

and my mouth shall declare
thy praise.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>18 Quoniam si voluisses sacrificium, dedissem utique; holocaustis non delectaberis.</p> <p>19 Sacrificium Deo spiritus contritulus; cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.</p> <p>20 Benigna fac, Domine, in bona voluntate tua Sion, ut ædificentur muri Jerusalem.</p> <p>21 Tunc acceptabis sacrificium justitiæ, oblationes et holocausta:</p> <p>tunc imponent super altare tuum vitulos.</p> | <p>18 For if thou hadst desired sacrifice, I would indeed have given it: with burnt offerings thou wilt not be delighted.</p> <p>19 A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit: a contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.</p> <p>20 Deal favorably, O Lord, in thy good will with Sion: that the walls of Jerusalem may be built up.</p> <p>21 Then shalt thou accept the sacrifice of justice, oblations and whole burnt offerings.</p> <p>then shall they lay calves upon thy altar.</p> |
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PSALM L

THIS, the fourth Penitential Psalm, may well be considered an amplification of David's reply to the prophet Nathan: "*I have sinned against the Lord*" (2 Kings xii. 13.) There is no sufficient reason for denying its Davidic authorship. Verses 20, 21 were probably added during the Babylonian Captivity to adapt the psalm to the needs of the time.

The Church frequently puts this psalm upon our lips because it contains everything needed for perfect contrition. The sorrow expressed is interior (19), supernatural (6), and universal (11b). It is accompanied by sincere confession (5, 6), firm purpose of amendment (15-17), and confidence in the mercy of God (3).

Synopsis.—An appeal to God's mercy for forgive-

ness (3, 4); confession of sin (5, 6); further acknowledgment of sin (7, 8). A prayer for complete pardon (9-11) with renewal of heart and restoration of divine favor (12-14). Vows of praise and thanksgiving (15-19). Prayer for restoration (20, 21).

Verses 3, 4.—A year or more has passed since David committed the sin of adultery and homicide, yet he is unrepentant when Nathan comes to admonish and reprove him. The words of the prophet bring him to a sense of his great sinfulness and he turns to the mercy of God for forgiveness. "Show me Thy loving kindness, O God, and blot out all my iniquity. Thoroughly wash and cleanse me from my sins."

The Hebrew "*kabas*" means to wash by rubbing and kneading; it is seldom used except in reference to clothing. "*Tahar*" is used for cleansing from ceremonial uncleanness. (Cf. *Lev. xiii. 6, 34.*) Hence the Psalmist looks upon sin as a foul spot or stain on the soul, and as an uncleanness making one unfit for the friendship of God.

Verses 5, 6.—Admonished by the prophet and enlightened by divine grace, David realizes the malice of his sins and openly acknowledges it by sincere confession. "I realize my iniquity and the thought of it is ever before me. I have hidden my sins from the eyes of men, but they are known to Thee. In Thy sight have I sinned and done that which is an evil in Thy eyes. I now openly acknowledge my guilt that Thy words of reproof and condemnation may not seem harsh and undeserved; I confess my sins that all may recognize Thy justice when they see my punishments."

Verse 6 is rather obscure. "*To Thee only have I*

sinned," probably means that David had so effectively concealed his sins that they were known to God alone. In God's sight only had he sinned. (Cf. 2 Kings xii. 12.) "*For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing in the sight of all Israel, and in the sight of this sun.*"

It may also mean that in so far as his evil deeds were sinful they were an offense against God alone, for it was God's laws that he had transgressed. David undoubtedly wronged others by his sins but the offense against God so far outweighed all other wrongs that he might truly say: "I have sinned against Thee alone."

In Hebrew the second part of the verse reads: "*That Thou mayest appear just when Thou speakest; clear when Thou judgest.*" This makes the meaning plainer. The Vulgate probably means: "I openly acknowledge my sins that those who call Thy justice into question (*when Thou art judged*) may see that my punishments are justly deserved. Thus wilt Thou overcome them." "*Judicaris*" of the Vulgate may also be taken in the active sense as a contraction from "*judicaveris*."

Verses 7, 8.—In his confession David goes beyond the sins of which he is accused and declares that he was born in sin; yea, even conceived in iniquity. This inborn depravity of human nature is some extenuation of his crimes and a source of confidence in imploring divine mercy. What can be expected of this sin-stained nature? It will sometimes give way to its evil inclinations, and sins of human frailty result.

God loves faithfulness; therefore He enlightened David's heart with grace and wisdom to recognize

the evil of his sins and turn from them with sincere repentance. The meaning is clearer in Hebrew: "*Behold, truth dost Thou desire in the reins, and in the hidden part do Thou make me know wisdom;*" or, "*Thou shalt make me know wisdom.*" Nearly all Catholic authors take verse 7 as a reference to original sin. It is difficult to explain it in any other sense. In Hebrew we have the singular, "*iniquity, sin,*" instead of the plural, "*iniquities, sins.*" "*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*" "*For*" at the beginning of the verse should be omitted.

Verses 9-11.—Having realized the enormity of his crimes and humbly confessed them, David now implores forgiveness. "Sprinkle me with hyssop, that I may be cleansed; wash me, that I may become whiter than snow." (Cf. *Isaias* i. 18.) "*If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool.*" "Let me hear the joyful words of merciful forgiveness and my very bones, crushed by remorse and fear of punishment, will rejoice ¹ at the assurance of pardon. Turn Thy face from my iniquities; blot them out that they may no longer stand in Thy sight."

Verse 9 is a reference to the legal purifications prescribed by the Law. Hyssop was used to sprinkle blood upon the person or thing to be purified. (Cf. *Lev.* xiv.) Washing was also prescribed for all legal purifications.

Verses 12-14.—In these verses David prays for a renewal of heart and restoration to divine favor. "Create in me, O God, a heart unsoiled by the foul

¹ Cf. *Ps.* xxxiv. 10.

deformities of sin, and renew within me a steadfast (Vulg. *right*) spirit—a spirit of perseverance, proof against all the allurements of passion. Cast me not away from Thy favor on account of my sins, as Thou didst reject Saul. (2 *Kings* vii. 15.) Take not from me Thy holy spirit which I received at my anointing. (1 *Kings* xvi. 13.) Grant me the happiness of Thy forgiveness,¹ and strengthen me in a spirit of willing obedience. (Hebr. *spirit of willingness*)." Verse 14b may also be rendered: "*And with a princely spirit uphold me,*" i.e., "uphold or confirm me in the spirit worthy of a ruler—a spirit becoming a king in Israel." This accords with the reading of the Vulgate: "*spiritu principali*." The Septuagint has "*governing*" or "*directing*" spirit: "Strengthen or uphold me, O Lord, with Thy guiding spirit."

Verses 15-17.—The Psalmist urges his petition by showing how the glory of God will be promoted, and by promising thanksgiving. His case will be an example for the instruction of others. When sinners learn of his forgiveness and hear his words of praise they will be aroused to new hopes of pardon and will turn to God with sincere repentance.

David vows thanksgiving: "Deliver me, O Lord, from the guilt of bloodshed (the murder of Urias) and my tongue shall proclaim Thy righteousness. Open my lips, O Lord; take away my iniquities, that my lips may sing the praises of Thy mercy."

Verses 18, 19.—David promises thanksgiving and praise because sacrifices are not acceptable to God. "If Thou hadst desired sacrifices I would have offered them willingly. Thou art not pleased with

¹ Cf. Verse 10.

burnt offerings, so there remains for me but words of praise and the sacrifice of a contrite and humbled heart. This sacrifice Thou dost never reject."

In what sense could David say that God did not desire sacrifice for sins when it is plainly commanded in the Law? (Cf. *Lev.* v, vi, vii.) The Law strictly commands that adultery and homicide be punished by death. (Cf. *Lev.* xx. 10; *Ex.* xxi. 12, 29.) Hence no sacrifices were prescribed for these sins because they could not be atoned for in this manner. David could truly say that God did not desire sacrifice for these sins and there was no one to execute a sentence of death against the king. Nothing remained but to implore the mercy of God, and to offer the sacrifice of a contrite heart, and the thanksgiving of praise.

Verses 20, 21.—This psalm is eminently fitted to answer the needs of a people led into captivity on account of their sins and deprived of the privilege of offering their accustomed sacrifices. We can easily believe that the Jews of the Captivity made frequent use of it. Turning their thoughts toward Jerusalem they would naturally add a prayer for its restoration and the rebuilding of the Temple where the sacrifices of the Law might be carried out in all their ancient splendor. This prayer has probably been crystallized in verses 20, 21. They are also well suited to the situation described in 2 *Esdras* i, ii—the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem by Nehemias.

Delitzsch considers these verses the words of David himself begging God to deal mercifully with Jerusalem that the walls might be completed, as they actually were by Solomon later on.



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